The Middlebury Campus

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RETURN OF WINTER CARNIVAL SEES ALTERATIONS FOR WEATHER AND COVID-19

By LAUREN THOMSON
Contributing Writer

Middlebury celebrated the 99th annual Winter Carnival on Feb. 18 and 19, with slight alterations due to weather and Covid-19 restrictions.

Due to icy conditions at the Snow Bowl, students watching the annual ski races were asked not to hike the hill and instead gathered outside of the lodge. The Winter Ball, typically hosted by Middlebury College Activities Board (MCAB) on Saturday evening was also replaced by a Winter Wonderland Carnival in Virtue Field House. The new event included games such as mini golf, bubble soccer, laser tag and inflatables.

According to MCAB Social Executive Karina Sharma '22, this year's Winter Carnival resembled the traditional pre-pandemic Winter Carnivals more than the 2021 Winter Carnival, which took place over a week rather than a weekend. However, Covid-19 guidelines remained a significant part of the planning process.

"We worked very hard to make sure that this winter carnival was as fun as it could be and as safe as it could be," Sharma said. "Unfortunately, a ball was not able to happen with the current Covid-19 guidelines."

Other Winter Carnival events hosted by MCAB on Friday and Saturday included a movie night, bonfire, silent disco and trivia night. On Friday night, Middlebury's tap group "On Tap" performed to an audience of over 100 students.

Some students felt that Winter Carnival events were not well publicized. Nick Luo '23 enjoyed

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Photo of the Week: Icy Trees By Forest Hall

PHOTO BY LYNN YAN '24.5

NEWS IN BRIEF

COVID-19 testing to include both PCR and antigen tests

By SABRINA SALAM
Contributing Writer

This spring, the college will shift its Covid-19 testing strategy to distribute rapid antigen tests to symptomatic students and staff instead of requiring weekly PCR testing.

The college has secured 30,000 antigen tests, Vice President of Student Affairs Smita Ruzicka and Chief Health Officer and College Physician Mark Peluso told The Campus.

In an email to students, the college said PCR testing will continue for those who wish to get tested, along with "close contacts, to confirm the results of negative antigen tests in symptomatic students, for testing before and after travel, and for athletics competitions as required."

The plan is "to distribute antigen tests to students and employees in early March and at that time we will provide guidance on when it is best to use PCR vs. antigen tests," Ruzicka and Peluso wrote in an email to The Campus.

This shift from PCR to rapid antigen testing follows official public health guidance in Vermont and in the U.S.

"The number of cases of Covid-19 will become a less meaningful metric in our management of the virus with the availability of home antigen tests and the likelihood that not everyone who takes a test will report the result," Ruzicka and Peluso said. "[The] campus's high rate of vaccination and

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SPORTS

ALI NULLMEYER '24 AND MICHEL MACEDO '22.5 MAKE OLYMPIC SHOWINGS IN ALPINE SKIING

By JACK McGUIRE
Contributing Writer

While many Middlebury students enjoyed the slower pace of J-term and the recent February break, Ali Nullmeyer '24 and Michel Macedo '22.5 were in Beijing, competing on the world's highest athletic stage. Both members of the Middlebury alpine team, Nullmeyer (Canada) and Macedo (Brazil) raced in the slalom ski event at the Olympics.

Nullmeyer made her Olympic debut in Beijing, finishing 21st among the 88 competitors with a combined two-run time of 1:47.96. Macedo, meanwhile, made his second appearance after competing in the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. In the men's slalom, Macedo completed his first run in 59.88 seconds, placing 37th among the 88 competitors. However, he was unable to complete his second run, leaving him ineligible to place in the final standings. Macedo was originally supposed to compete in the Giant Slalom event, but he tested positive for Covid-19 when he arrived in Beijing. After receiving his result, Macedo spent seven days in isolation housing and had just one day of practice before he competed in the slalom.

"It was an unfortunate situation getting Covid-19 on the way there, but at the end of the day I was happy I got to race," Macedo said. "I kind of accepted that it was not going to be my best skiing since I had been sitting around for a week and not racing."

Leading up to the Olympics, Nullmeyer had been extremely successful in international skiing competitions. She placed fifth at the slalom at the World Cup in Zagreb, Croatia on Jan. 4, 2022, and a week later placed sixth at the World Cup in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia.

"I went into the Games with some solid results, so I was definitely going out there to give it my all," Nullmeyer said. "I fell short of my performance goals but in terms of the experience I still had an amazing time."

Nullmeyer believes that her experience in the Olympics will help better prepare her for success in collegiate skiing and other international competitions.

"Skiing at the Olympics and at World Cups definitely prepares me for all future competitions" Nullmeyer said. "The more I race at that level, the more I can calm my nerves at all races which is helpful, however there's always some butterflies that will be there especially when you're racing in a

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LOCAL

Daniel Gutierrez '24 adds Bud's Beans to his growing coffee-roasting company

By MAGGIE REYNOLDS
Local Editor

A Middlebury student and owner of a local coffee-roasting company recently purchased another Middlebury-based coffee business.

Daniel Gutierrez '24 began his coffee-roasting business Iluminar Coffee — where he roasts coffee beans and sells them to both wholesale accounts and consumers — about two years ago as a new and exciting passion project. Gutierrez took two gap years between high school and Middlebury, during which time he worked a side job as a barista and learned how to roast coffee.

"It was always supposed to be like a little passion side project. I never really wanted it to grow," he said.

In March 2020, when the pandemic put other things in his life on hold, Gutierrez was able to really focus on getting better at coffee roasting, he said.

However, according to Gutierrez, April 2021 was when things began to really take off for Iluminar. His girlfriend, Grace Futral '21.5, did a complete rebranding of the company's packaging and design, which led to a near-immediate quadrupling of sales.

"Once we released that [rebrand], things kind of took off," Gutierrez said. "I wasn't prepared for it. I wasn't expecting it."

Futral said she previously had some experience working with illustration and signage for another small business in Middlebury called Be The Change, but no formal education in graphic design for a business. "I thought I would be good at creating a brand and being able to build from that," she said.

Gutierrez estimated that before the rebrand he was roasting between 10 and 20 pounds of coffee a week. Immediately after the rebrand he roasted 80–120 pounds per

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ARTS & CULTURE

AN INTERVIEW WITH MIDD'S LITTLEST STUDENT

By SUMMER HORNBOSTEL
Arts & Culture Editor

If you aren't yet acquainted with Little Man (@littlemanoncampus) then you're missing out. Perhaps he could be considered part of the incoming class of Febs, but it is certain that he has taken the campus by storm (or should we say squall). During this past weekend's Winter Carnival, our smallest ceramic student took over Middlebury's official Instagram account. Maybe you have no idea who or what Little Man is, or maybe you just want to learn more about him, but either way, read on for a personal interview with the figurine of the moment and a look behind the curtains at his creators.

COURTESY OF MAGGIE BLAKE
Little Man is Middlebury's smallest student.

Interview with Little Man

Campus: *How does it feel to be a star on campus? How did you come to be one?*

Little Man: I'm going to turn that question right back around to YOU! You're a star, we all are. We all shine on this campus. I'm humbled and honored to be able to share my love on this campus and so glad it resonates with this many people. To answer your second question, I think it's karma. When you put joy and love out into the world it comes back.

C: You go by the name Little Man. What is the significance of the emphasis on your littleness? How does it contribute to your message?

LM: The emphasis on my littleness comes from embracing the reason you stand out. And even the smallest of people can make the biggest of differences.

C: Where is your favorite spot on campus?

LM: I love the Knoll! Connecting with nature is so freeing, and I love admiring the beauty of the world — whether through the mountains, the flowers or the people. Beauty comes in all different forms, and it never looks the same, and at the Knoll there's always something new to find beautiful.

C: Tell me a little bit about your travels around the world! I understand you made some new friends. Do you plan on finding other little friends around campus?

LM: It was a treat to meet some lovely little fellows who were visiting the Study Abroad Office from around the world! I like to think that everyone is my friend, and I just haven't met them yet, so I can't wait to be introduced to everyone on campus and elsewhere. Although I haven't left the country yet, I will be studying abroad this

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SPORTS

Club Nordic continues to grow, impresses at regional championship
By CHARLIE KEOHANE

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By OWEN PARK

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Made with love: John Maru builds sushi business in Middlebury

By RACHEL LU
Staff Writer

A line wound down the stairs of the Grille every Thursday during the fall semester, as students waited for their lunch of the day — a box of sushi. While the sushi was briefly available on the meal plan as part of the college's efforts to reduce the lunch rush in dining halls, sushi has been a staple available to purchase in the Grille for several years.

Behind this popular sushi operation is sushi chef John Maru, founder of Sushi Maru. In the Freeman International Center kitchen, Maru works with a partner and three part-time student workers to make an average of 150 sushi boxes a day, distributed in Crossroads, MiddXpress and the Grille.

Maru is in the kitchen making sushi at 6 a.m from Monday to Friday.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the college added meals at the Grille to the meal plan to spread students out during meal times. Thursday lunches included one sushi box per student, quickly becoming a popular alternative to long lines in dining halls. To meet demand, Middlebury bought 500 sushi boxes to serve at the Grille, and Maru stayed as late as 2 a.m. on Wednesday nights to ensure the freshness of each roll. Each sushi box contains a sushi roll, a Makuni leaf garnish, pickled ginger and a dab of wasabi.

Originally from Burma, Maru arrived in Middlebury in fall 2018 to work for Sushi with Gusto, the college's hired sushi business at the time. Maru was stationed at Crossroads Café where he made fresh rolls for students each day. In 2019, Middlebury ended its contract with Sushi with Gusto, and Maru faced the possibility of moving with the company, but he was reluctant to leave.

"Not every customer is the same, and I know what the customers here, the students, want for their sushi," Maru said. "I wanted to stay at Middlebury and keep serving the students here."

Maru decided to start his own sushi business at the college, but the process was harder than he had anticipated.

"It was my first time doing my own business, so everything was new to me, and we almost didn't make it. Everything is new; I am new to the U.S. and new to businesses, so it was very hard for me," Maru said.

Maru opened Sushi Maru in fall 2019 after securing supplier approval, insurance and a license from the Vermont Department of Health. Without a third party company, Maru had more flexibility in selecting ingredients and experimenting with sushi options.

"Under Sushi with Gusto, everything was limited and with strict regulations. Now that I have my own business, I can do more," said Maru. "I hope people will be satisfied by my sushi because I make it with love. I use clean, fresh ingredients. I add more quantity so students can be full with just one box of sushi."

When students evacuated campus in spring of 2020, Crossroads Café Manager Laura Chang '19.5 started a GoFundMe to help Maru and his family during the pandemic when the college temporarily stopped retail and food operations.

"I started the GoFundMe for him because we were all told to evacuate the campus after Covid became a lot more serious and prevalent in the US," Chang said.

The fundraiser exceeded its initial goal of $2,500, ultimately raising a total of $5,671.

When the college reopened, Maru was grateful that he could serve sushi to the students again and said the generosity he received during the pandemic motivated him.

"I'm not only looking at the profit," Maru said. "I want to give back to the students who have done so much for me."

Maru has expanded his business to the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op and hopes to one day serve sushi at a sit-down restaurant.

"I love serving people. I always think: what can I do to serve people? And food is my way to do that," Maru said.

ABIGAIL CHANG / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

John Maru's sushi is available on campus in Crossroads Cafe and MiddXpress.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Spring Covid-19 testing to include both PCR and antigen tests

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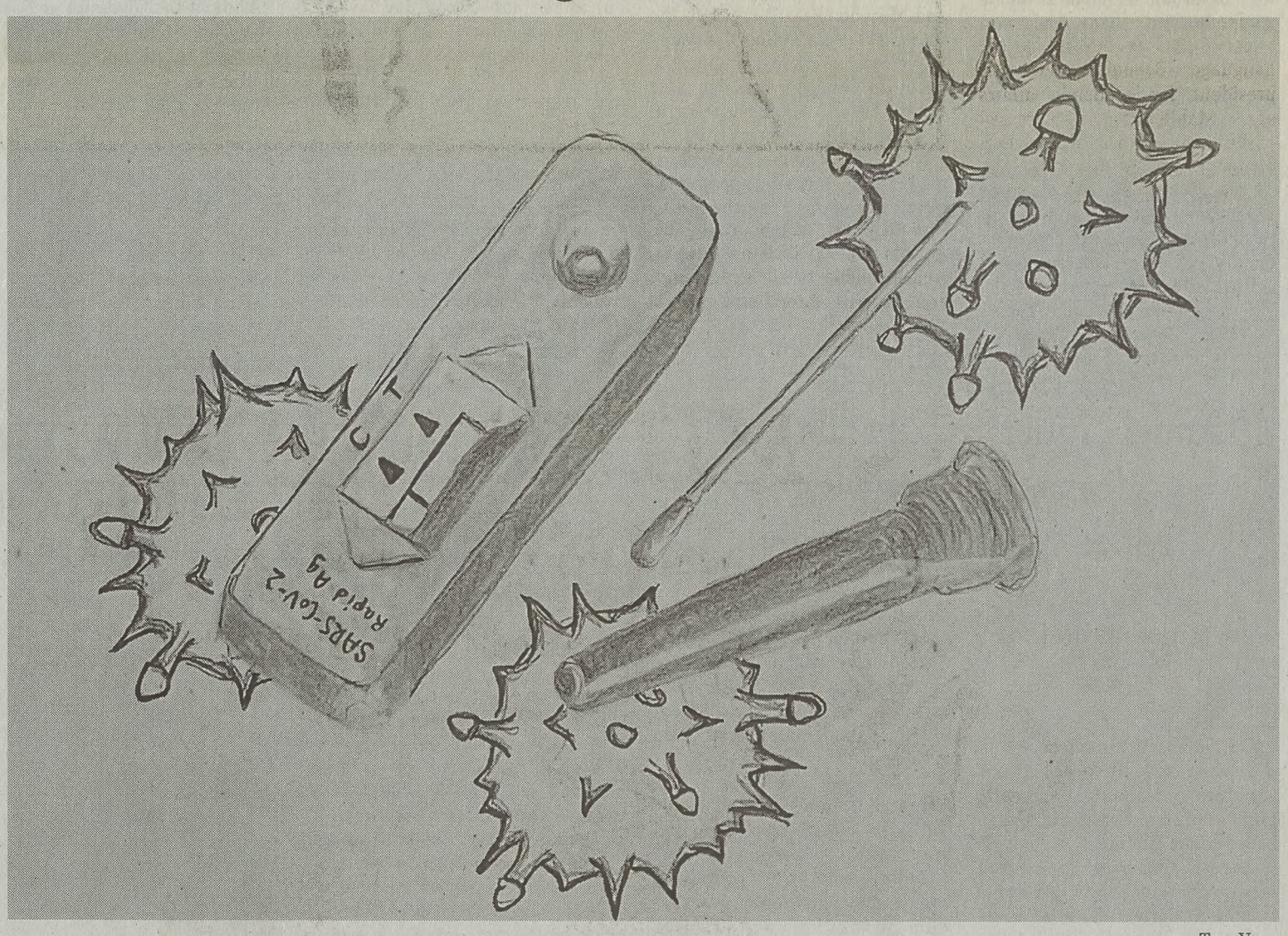
effective treatments for high-risk individuals reduce the risk of adverse consequences in a test early and treat early strategy."

However, Ruzicka and Peluso say that they worry testing will provide "a false sense of security."

> "We need everyone in the community to continue doing their part in keeping themselves and each other safe and healthy."

"We cannot solely rely on testing (whether antigen or PCR) to ensure our community is safe," they said. "We need everyone in the community to continue doing their part in keeping themselves and each other safe and healthy."

The college plans to provide health and safety guidelines as the pandemic continues and hopes to return to "a more normal college experience once it is reasonable to do so," the two administrators said.



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Winter Carnival, but said he had difficulty accessing information about events.

> Activities at the Snow Bowl were altered due to weather and safety conditions, rather than Covid-19.

"The student activity board [Presence] did not have enough information," Luo said. "I didn't know what was happening at the Snow Bowl. I had to hear from friends about the Snow Bowl, the arcade and the fireworks because we never received an email about it."

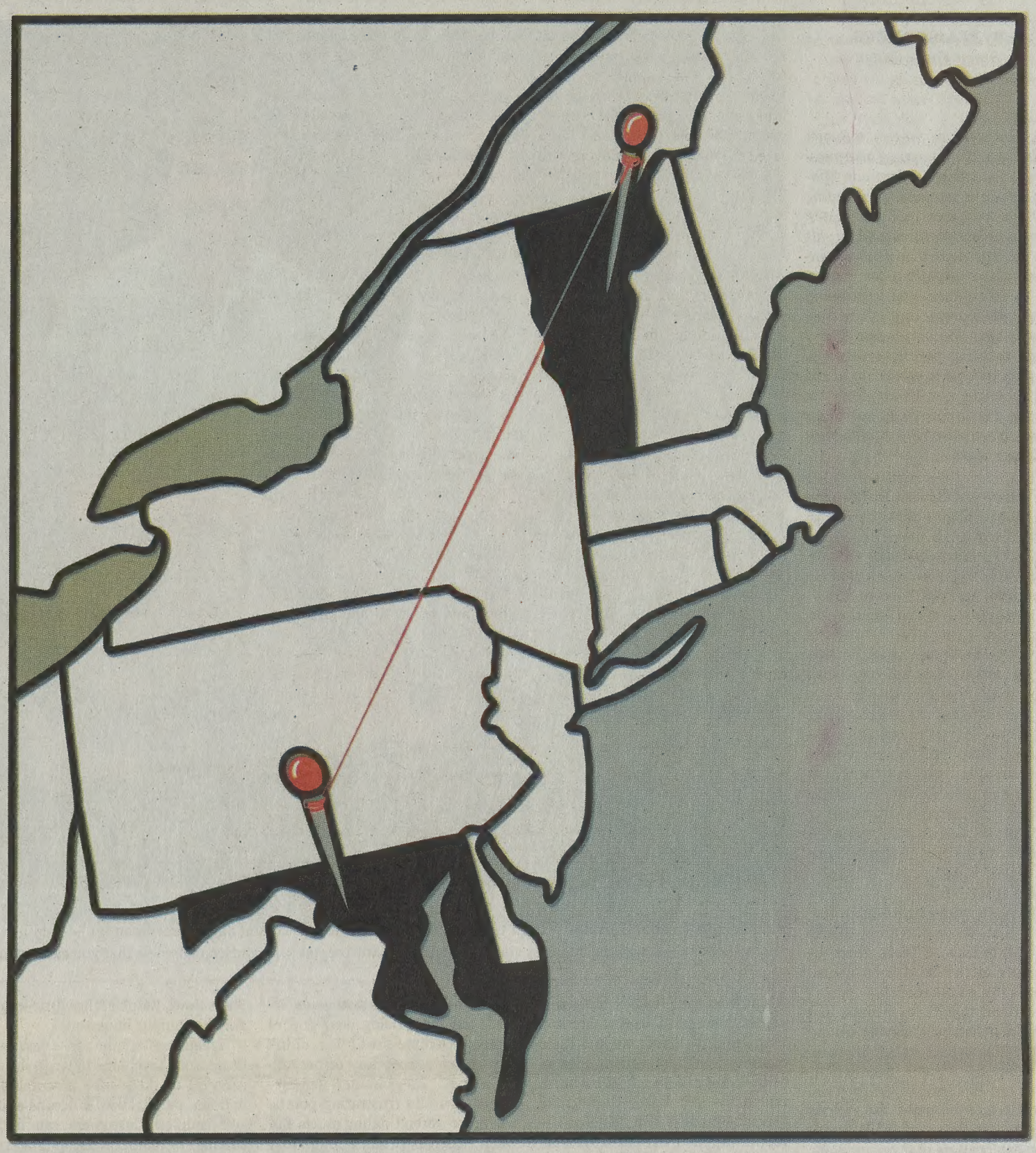
Activities at the Snow Bowl were altered due to weather and safety conditions, rather than Covid-19 precautions. In the past, it was tradition for students attending the ski races on Saturday to hike up the Allen trail to watch the races. However, in the days prior to Winter Carnival, Middlebury faced temperatures of 50 degrees Fahrenheit, followed by freezing temperatures as low as 10 degrees, creating sheets of ice on the mountain. Middlebury Ski Patrol determined the conditions were too icy for students to hike, so students watched from the bottom of the trail instead.

COURTESY OF LUCY EMPTAGE

Students watch the Winter Carnival ski races at the Snow Bowl.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Goucher College and Middlebury Language Schools announce 4+1 degree program



Sabrina Templeton

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Contributing Writer

Middlebury Language Schools announced on Feb. 11 that they will partner with Goucher College in Baltimore to launch a 4+1 masters program, offering Goucher students the opportunity to pursue dual undergraduate and graduate degrees including a Master of Arts of Applied Languages in either French or Spanish.

The college called the new program, which is set to start this fall, a mission to "[strengthen] both institutions' commitment to global education," in their announcement. Accepted students will study a chosen language during one or two summers in Vermont and an academic year in an abroad location related to their chosen language.

In addition to their partnership with Middlebury, Goucher College works with other universities such as Johns Hopkins University and Loyola University Maryland to extend their network of abroad and language programs. This opportunity is offered to students with graduate-level language proficiency and encourages students to begin pursuing their graduate degree on the Vermont campus immediately after graduating Goucher College. Similar programs are available to Middlebury undergraduate students.

Steve Snyder, dean of the Language Schools and vice president for academic affairs at Middlebury, expressed enthusiasm for this new opportunity.

"Goucher's new 4+1 master's program with Middlebury recognizes the extraordinary quality of the language and culture education offered by the Language Schools and Schools Abroad and highlights the opportunity — which has always been available to all Middlebury students — to extend and deepen the undergraduate experience with the most rigorous full-immersion graduate training available," Snyder said in an email to The Campus.

Snyder is also excited that students will be able to connect with one other students from different educational, professional and personal backgrounds.

RECENT MIDDLEBURY GRADS GROW BUSINESS THAT CREATES 3D WOOD-CARVED LANDSCAPE MODELS

By BLAISE SIEFER
Senior Sports Editor

COURTESY OF ALEX GEMME

Founders of Treeline Terrains — Alex Gemme '21, Nathaniel Klein '21, and Jacob Freedman '21 — hold a large Snow Bowl carving outside of the Innovation Hub, where the business started. Their company creates 3-D landscape models that you can touch.

Hi, all! I'm Blaise, the Senior Sports Editor for The Campus. This semester, I'm starting a column on Middlebury entrepreneurs, including current students and graduates. My biweekly features will profile an entrepreneur or a team of entrepreneurs, detailing the history of their venture and explaining where they are at and where they are headed. My aim is two-fold: I want to bring greater awareness to the innovation occurring at the college while also highlighting the many resources and pathways available to aspiring Middlebury entrepreneurs.

The story of Treeline Terrains begins at the Middlebury College Snow Bowl.

Just 13 miles southeast of campus, the Bowl is a hub of student activity in the winter, welcoming skiers, snowboarders and other winter enthusiasts. But not all students can afford these expensive sports.

When Alex Gemme '21, Jacob Freedman '21 and Nathaniel Klein '21 were student ski instructors at the Bowl, they witnessed this exclusivity first-hand. Many of their close friends from campus didn't ski or snowboard, deterred by the cost. So, the three friends decided to create the Lesson Fund, designed to help Middlebury students on financial aid participate in winter sports at the Bowl.

Once the fund was established, the friends decided to give a thank-you gift to Daphne Diego, their supervisor at the Bowl, who helped them through the process.

Around that time, Gemme and Freedman had been playing around in the Makerspace in the Freeman International Center, where students can explore creative projects. Gemme enjoyed using the various machines in the space, while Freedman explored his passion for maps. Combining their interests, the duo created a 3-D wood carving of the Snow Bowl as a gift for Diego. It was a hit.

Diego loved her carving so much that she encouraged the ski instructors to consider starting a business. Gemme and Freedman didn't share that vision, but they did add Klein to the team, a skilled woodworker. For the first few years, they continued to make Snow Bowl-centric carvings, giving them away as gifts.

But with time, Gemme, Freedman and Klein improved their skills, and a breakthrough discovery allowed them to incorporate ski and hiking trails into their carvings. Soon, they began to carve other landscapes.

Maybe Diego was onto something.

The founders received funding from the MiddChallenge and Tree House Fund grants — both offered by Middlebury's Innovation Hub — allowing them to buy more machinery, supplies and materials. Last January, Freedman and Klein continued to pursue their idea in MiddEntreprenurs, a J-term course taught by Sam Roach-Gerber and David Bradbury of VCET. The month-long course helped the team consider their pricing and choose their motto and company name.

Progress was rapid. In the spring, the founders registered Treeline Terrains as an LLC, fitting in paperwork between homework assignments. But with graduation just a few months away, the team wondered if Treeline Terrains was something they could pursue full-time.

"We didn't want to end up in an office and we love living near the mountains," Gemme said. "So we thought, OK, could we make this work? It was a lot of discussion, but we decided to commit to it because it seemed like the best option."

The company's first move was to Groton, Mass., where Klein's grandfather had a woodshop. The shop had all the necessary tools to make their carvings, and free rent was certainly a plus. Gemme, who was volunteering in Colorado for the summer, helped remotely.

"At this point, we had some orders, but our pricing was kind of whack," Gemme said. "We didn't have a centralized way of packaging things. The summer definitely had low and frustrating points, where we weren't selling much. But when I came back from Colorado, I brought some excitement, and Jacob and Nathaniel were still willing to try it."

Last fall, the team decided to move back to Vermont. They had a strong support network in the Green Mountain state, and they had also built up a relationship with the A. Johnson lumber yard in Bristol. They didn't necessarily intend on finding their way back to Middlebury, but a connection through the Innovation Hub helped them find a woodshop on South Street. Middlebury felt like the right fit.

Since moving to Middlebury, the team has mastered production and are now able to carve any landscape in under two weeks. Klein specializes in woodworking, while Gemme runs technology and sales and Freedman focuses on mapmaking and project development. The team has continued to improve their website and has found their way into numerous stores, including the Snow Bowl, Ralph Myhre Pro Shop, and the campus bookstore.

Treeline Terrains sells everything from keychains to large-scale carvings of ski & hike mountains, national parks, lakes & oceans and golf courses. Customers can find carvings of major landscapes in six states: Vermont, New Hampshire, Colorado, New York, California and Utah. To date, the team has sold almost 500 units.

The founders are also focused on social impact. Recently, Treeline Terrains has partnered with Vermont Adaptive to carve a ski map of Sugarbush Resort's Mount Ellen for visually impaired skiers and has worked with the Middlebury Area Land Trust to create a model of the Trail Around Middlebury ("TAM"). "The most exciting projects are big carvings for community partners," Gemme said.

As Treeline Terrains continues to grow, Gemme notes that their continued success will hinge on marketing and advertising. To help with these efforts, the team is in the process of hiring a Middlebury student intern to run their social media.

"When people see [our product], they usually want to know more or buy it," Gemme said. "For us, it's a question of how we can show this to more people."

"We have this whole 'Made in Vermont' vibe that we try to sell with our products," Gemme added. "It's a supportive community. People want us to succeed, even if they don't want to buy something from us."

If you are interested in learning more about Treeline Terrains, check out their website and follow the company on social media. And, if you know of any nonprofits or organizations that might enjoy a custom wood carving, reach out to Jacob Freedman at Jacob@TreelineTerrains.com.

If you are a student entrepreneur looking to connect with other makers at Middlebury, stop by the Innovation Hub for advising, information on entrepreneur-focused classes, or opportunities for workspaces on campus. The Hub offers many resources to students, including mentorship and funding.

If you or someone you know would like to be featured in this column, please contact bsiefer@middlebury.edu.

CyclingSavvy brings bicycle-safety class to Middlebury following summit

By MAYA HEIKKINEN
News Editor

A Vermont Bicycle Summit will be held at the Middlebury Town Hall on May 6 and will feature panel discussions, individual presentations, tables from cycling organizations and nonprofits around the state and a keynote speaker.

Cycling instructors John Allen '68 of Waltham, Mass., and Bruce Lierman of Bennington, Vt., hope to offer a panel discussion about CyclingSavvy, a program that is a part of the American Bicycling Education Association, Allen said.

CyclingSavvy aims to provide education resources for bikers and advocates for cooperation between bikers and motorists and bike-specific infrastructure in communities.

In conjunction with the summit, they will also hold a three-part CyclingSavvy course for riders in the Middlebury community the day after the summit, May 7, with the hope that cyclists attending the summit will stick around for the event.

"I'm, of course, extremely interested in seeing whether Middlebury community members would be interested in taking this course," Allen said.

A classroom part to CyclingSavvy's course will take place on Zoom prior to the May 6 summit, while parking lot and road sessions will occur throughout the morning and afternoon of May 7.

"The parking lot session is about bicycle handling skills — how to use the brakes effectively, how to shift gears so that you accelerate quickly, how to make a quick emergency stop, how to turn quickly out of trouble," Allen said.

The road session will focus on practice under real conditions, including how to approach the rotary in town.

> "The object of this is to build skill and confidence in riding a bicycle under real world conditions."

"The object of this is to build skill and confidence in riding a bicycle under real world conditions,"Allen said.

Allen has been cycling for over fifty years, since his time as a student at Middlebury. "That's a history that goes back to when I was at Middlebury. I was the only student who regularly used a bicycle to get between classes at that time," Allen said.

He began taking cycling more seriously in the mid-1970s, when he became an expert consultant and witness to attorneys in bicycle crashes. He also published the Complete Book of Bicycle Commuting in 1980 before becoming a CyclingSavvy instructor in 1982.

Allen said he would recommend the course for anyone teen-aged or older who is able to ride a bicycle with stability, operate brakes and shift gears. "It's not a children's course; it's a driver training course for bicyclists. What I have to say is that after you take the course, your whole approach to bicycling might be transformed."

Lierman also said that the course is "very much oriented toward street riders and people riding on their own." The curriculum works well for learning to ride in a town, Allen added.

Participants also must arrive with a working bicycle, and preferably one with gears, Allen said. Borrowed bikes and electric bikes are perfectly acceptable as well.

Though the exact location of the parking lot and route of the road sessions are yet to be determined, Allen and Lierman said they plan to research far in advance to find areas and situations that cyclists might find challenging.

It is a course, Lierman said, aimed to change attitudes about the cyclist's role in traffic. "We often use the phrase mindful cycling, because it's about being aware of your immediate surroundings."

Registration for the course can be found at cyclingsavvy.org, with signups listed on the event calendar.

Daniel Gutierrez '24 adds Bud's Beans to his growing coffee-roasting company

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week, and now he has increased to 160–250 pounds per week.

Gutierrez's job is split into two primary responsibilities, he explained. The first, and perhaps most important, is sustainably sourcing raw coffee to import to the United States. This can include dealing with international trade and working around roadblocks that impede many American coffee-roasters, such as a cocaine bust in a Peruvian port, he explained.

His second responsibility is roasting the coffee beans to produce the final product. From there, he can sell the coffee to a number of wholesale accounts, from restaurants to bakeries and other businesses that sell the coffee. Alternatively, the coffee can go directly to consumers through the Iluminar Coffee webstore. Eighty percent of Iluminar's wholesale accounts are here in Vermont, Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez already had a sublease agreement for the space of another coffee-roaster, Bud's Beans, in the Marbleworks district, along with a space provided by the college for storing and shipping things. In the late summer and early fall of 2021, though, as sales continued to increase, he began looking for his own coffee-roasting space.

> "I thought I would be good at creating a brand and being able to build from that."

This led Gutierrez to discussing either sharing a space with Bud's Beans, or buying the business altogether.

Leah Keller, who has owned Bud's Beans with her husband Brian Carter for the past four years, said she and her husband had not been considering selling their business until Gutierrez approached them. However, they were excited by his passion and vision.

"Daniel had a really good background roasting coffee and a lot of really good energy," Keller said. "We felt that he would be able to keep the business going forward."

Before Keller and Carter, Bud's Beans was owned by William "Bud" Smith, who established the enterprise in 2000.

Gutierrez worked on negotiations with Keller and Carter from October until January 20th, 2022, when he closed on the purchase of Bud's Beans. Under the agreement, Gutierrez and Futral together own a Limited Liability Company (LLC) called Owl of the Night, under which is both Bud's Beans and Iluminar Coffee.

> "Daniel had a really good background roasting coffee and a lot of really good energy."

"I was always wanting to be legally invested in [Iluminar] as well," Futral said. "I felt that it had really become my own as well. It was a natural transition."

Gutierrez said he and Futral plan to renovate the roasting space of Bud's Beans and buy new equipment so that they can effectively operate both companies side-by-side. "They cover different market segments in the coffee industry, so we are going to try to grow both simultaneously," he said.

Gutierrez is taking the 2021-2022 school-year off to put all of his time into growing and developing Iluminar Coffee and Owl of the Night. "When I started Iluminar as a little side project, I was maybe making 100-200 bucks a week as extra money," he added. "Now this is a full-fledged six-figure business."

Iluminar Coffee and Bud's Beans can be found at local businesses such as the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-Op, Middlebury Bagel & Deli, Otter Creek Bakery and Shafer's Market, as well as online at https://www.iluminar.coffee and https://www.budsbeanscoffee.com.

Illustations from the Illuminar website.

Local Alpaca Farm celebrates 20 years of business

By JULIA PEPPER
Local Editor

Though Vermont is typically known for its dairy farms, a completely different type of farm can be found in Brandon, VT — Maple View Farm Alpacas (MVFA).

Frequented by both Vermont tourists and Middlebury students, MVFA is located on 100 acres of Vermont farmland, about 20 miles (a 25-minute drive) from campus. According to the farm's website, visitors to the farm are welcome to visit the alpacas, shop at the farm's stores, purchase alpacas and learn more about the alpaca breeding business. The farm will be celebrating 20 years of business this year.

Owners Deb and Ed Bratton started the farm in 2002, after previously working in corporate IT. The couple knew they wanted to do something different in retirement and were familiar with the area.

"After visiting family in Vermont for many years, we decided to move here, lucky to have found this beautiful farm," Deb said. They enjoy the actual farm work, as well as the alpacas themselves, she added.

Deb said her favorite trait of the alpacas is each of their unique personalities.

"Like people, each one is a bit different," she said. "As visitors have noted, some are clearly more social than others and since we host visits, it's always good to have a few of those."

According to Deb, another positive feature of alpacas is that they provide a product that can be harvested without any harm to the animal: alpaca fur. Alpacas are also lower maintenance than many other livestock because they require less milking.

Typical days at the farm begin at 5:30 a.m. with morning chores before the work day begins, such as cleaning pens and feeding the animals. The animals go out every day barring very poor weather.

"We do the farm chores ourselves. With only 20 alpacas now, that is easily accomplished. When we had 45, we still did all the chores ourselves but [if we had] more than that we would likely have help," Deb said.

During the day, the couple works on various projects for the farm while also attending to visitors. Each day ends with the evening chores: bringing in and feeding the alpacas, cleaning up, and tending to hay and water needs.

> "Like people, each [alpaca] is a bit different. As visitors have noted, some are clearly more social than others."

In addition to the farm, the Brattons opened a mill on their property where Deb spends most of her days, working alongside the farm's two part-time employees.

According to Deb, "About 10 years ago, we also opened the mill on the farm to make products for ourselves, but also outside customers. While it was really done out of necessity to get our own products made in a timely manner, we really do enjoy it as well."

The mill has since greatly expanded to have its own website and business of custom processing fiber into materials such as yarn and felt. The mill's equipment can be rented and is available for fiber workshops, which are hosted in the studio.

The farm also operates a store that sells many products made from alpaca fur, which is known to be both soft and durable. These alpaca fur products include both rugs and winter wear.

Additionally, MVFA regularly hosts events in which visitors can participate. Previous activities have included the Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival, as well as instruction on how to dye alpaca fibers.

Passersby to the farm often include out-of-state visitors, as well as guests of local residents. "It's always amazing to us how many repeat visitors we get," Deb said.

Middlebury student Susanna Schatz '24 said visiting the farm was one of her favorite experiences she has had at college so far.

"I loved petting the alpacas; there were two that were especially friendly and they came and sat down next to us," Schatz said. "I love animals and have a lot of pets at home and while I'm at Midd I definitely miss my pets so it was really nice to get to spend time with an animal."

"The owner of the farm was really kind, and he told us a lot about the alpacas and his experiences and answered all of our questions," she added.

Until recently, MVFA had bred their own alpacas, and had crias (young alpacas) on the farm each summer. Though the crias were fun, Deb said she and her husband decided to stop breeding alpacas because of their long life expectancy. This decision has allowed for stabilization in the size of the herd, and the Brattons can focus on other aspects of the farm.

DECREASING COVID-19 CASES IN ADDISON COUNTY BRING CHANGES IN PANDEMIC REGULATIONS

By GIULIA SHAUGHNESSY
Contributing Writer

After hitting record highs last month, Covid-19 cases in Vermont are starting to decrease, as the Vermont Department of Health reported only two new cases of Covid-19 in Addison County on Feb. 22. According to an email from Middlebury Updates sent on Feb. 18, Addison County saw a 52-percent decrease in positive Covid-19 cases reported in the last week. New positive cases decreased by 23 percent in the broader Vermont area during the same time period, while hospitalizations and deaths have also declined in recent weeks.

This offers some relief for the state after the rapid spike in cases Vermont experienced as a result of the Omicron variant, which accounted for nearly 40% of total Covid-19 infections in New England in late December. The improvement in the positive case numbers, in combination with the state's high vaccination rate, is starting to bring about changes in the state's Covid-19 regulations and restrictions.

Governor Phil Scott announced in his weekly press conference last week that in light of the decreasing case numbers, he will not be extending the masking requirement for Vermont schools after the current deadline of Feb. 28. He is urging schools with at least 80 percent vaccination rates to end their mask mandates after the end of this month.

In an Addison Independent article, Addison County School District Covid Coordinator Kelly Landwehr said that five of the district's nine schools have already surpassed the 80 percent vaccination mark required to end mask wearing, despite that statewide data which shows that less than 80 percent of Vermonters between the ages of 12 and 17 have been vaccinated.

Vermont Education Secretary Dan French noted that while the Governor recommends schools end their mask mandates, schools may still make their own choices on whether or not to keep masking requirements regardless of their vaccination percentages. However, it seems that Governor Scott's recommendation is already taking effect. Following the press conference, several school districts including the Addison Central and Mount Abraham Unified School Districts sent out memos pledging to make masking optional by mid-March, pending confirmation from the Department of Health that all of their schools had reached the 80 percent vaccination target.

Schools planning on removing the mask mandate have noted that this move may be concerning for some parents and students. At the same time, the feeling of cautious optimism comes through loud and clear.

Mount Abraham Unified School District Superintendent Patrick Reen stressed in his memo on Feb. 16 that the news is an indication of an improvement in Covid-19. "Beginning our transition away from some of our mitigation efforts, such as masking, is a step towards normalcy and learning to live with Covid-19," Reen wrote.

These changes to Covid-19 recommendations and guidelines reflect the ever-changing landscape of the pandemic in Vermont. With no new Covid-19 variants currently classified as variants of concern, the hope is that the ease in restrictions will be allowed to continue and that a post-pandemic life without masking, testing and illness is closer than ever.

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The Middlebury Campus

Navigating normal together

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

As a board, we have a somewhat informal tradition of kicking off the semester by welcoming the newest students to campus — whether through offering advice during a Covid-19 semester, for example, or making recommendations for bridging the Feb-reg divide. This year, however, we recognize that first-year Febs have arrived at Middlebury at a critical transition point amid the pandemic. Thus, this welcome warrants more nuance and clarity than those that came before it.

While we wish we could tell you that it'll be smooth sailing from here on out, we know that to do so would be naive. It would be more apt to tell you to buckle up and get ready for the possibility that things could change at any given moment, as it has for us more than once in the last two years. But amid it all — from Box, Label & Leave to takeout-only dining to ambiguous testing requirements — we've stuck it out together, discovering pockets of gratitude along the way.

Entering college invariably means shouldering a new level of independence. You, and only you, can decide where you want to be and what you want to do. And now, as Middlebury is moving toward a reality in which we are not told when to go to get tested, or how many people to gather with, or what level of contact tracing warrants isolation, these are decisions we all need to learn how to make for ourselves.

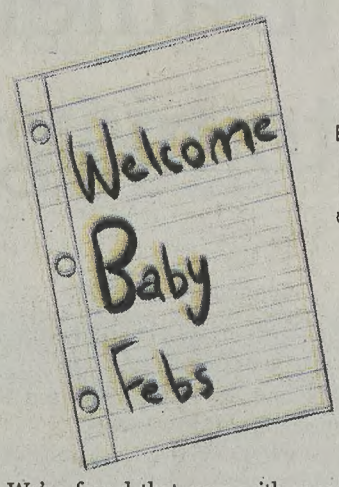
For many of us, Covid-19 has become less of a genuine threat and more of a looming inconvenience. And while the stakes may be less high post-vaccines, we also must recognize that the effects of such choices do not solely fall on our own shoulders. This is not to say that you should feel either inward guilt or outward judgment (we, for one, are glad the go/snitch era is over), but that it's OK to feel uncertain and uneasy about the vacuum of responsibility we have been left to parse through.

Living with Covid-19 at Middlebury no longer hinges on "following the rules." To move forward means balancing and considering a myriad of factors that are different for each of us. The ability to dictate your own experience is unnerving — but, in many ways, also invigorating.

Nevertheless, you don't need to always be searching for it. Some of your friends might be joining every club and learning everyone's name, but their experiences don't need to be yours. As upperclassmen, we've come to relish (and crave...) alone time, and value intentional relationships that take more than a few weeks to develop.

In short, the expectations you had for college may take some time to come to fruition — we're all still figuring out how to reestablish the foundation for our social lives while keeping our community safe. During a pre-pandemic weekend night, you could walk across campus and it would be, well, alive. But now we've become accustomed to smaller, intimate gatherings among our closest friends, and we haven't yet relearned how to unite the student body in the way we once did.

In essence, we're still figuring it out too — about personal accountability, everchanging social dynamics, and individual and collective fulfillment.



SABRINA TEMPLETON

We've found that even with months of Zoom, infinite collections of face masks, and new super variants, four years can still fly by. We're happy to have you on board to navigate "normal" together.

A Glossary:
Box, Label & Leave: a phrase coined by the Reslife team, it described the actions suggested to students during the evacuation of campus in March 2020 due the Covid-19 pandemic.
go/snitch: website shortcut for Middlebury's Covid-19 violation reporting page that was active during the fall 2020 semester.

It's time to rethink the Feb identity

Op-Ed

Alexandra Burns is a member of the class of 2021.5.

As my graduation approached, I thought a lot about what it meant to be a Feb as someone who didn't start as one. Firstly, it means that I can't downhill ski. As a member of the largest Feb class to date, I am one of those Covid-canceled-my-semester-abroad Febs. On Saturday February 13, 2022 I graduated alongside 189 of my peers. Of the 190 students who graduated, only 80 of those students began as part of that February admit class.

Though students have long been able to take a semester off or complete sufficient credits to graduate early, this flow of students between "Feb" and "reg" classes has been heightened by the pandemic. In the fall, the Campus ran a story exploring the evolving dynamics of Feb culture as more students have "Febbed" themselves in the past two years. One student in the piece expressed feeling like a "fake Feb" because she didn't enter the school as one. As a resident "fake Feb," I found that label to be a misnomer.

Nowhere was this shift in class years more evident than at my graduation, where those of us who did not begin our time at Middlebury as part of the Feb class comprised the majority of the graduating class. Though Middlebury has long imposed its image of what the Feb identity looks like, it's time for a rebranding.

It was hard not to cringe as I watched my own graduation ceremony.

"What makes being a Feb so special is our unique drive and enthusiasm, coupled with our small class size and our late arrival to Middlebury, which created a tight knit community that shares the common experience of a Feb-mester, and a common passion for adventure and exploration. Never has this been truer than for the class of 2021.5" student speaker Kaleb Patterson said to the graduating class.

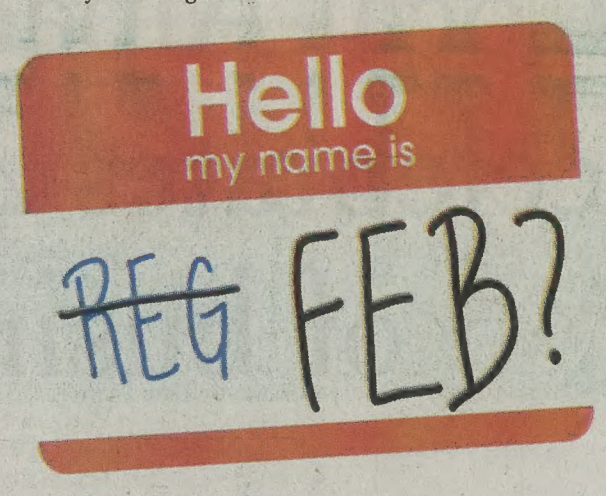
Kaleb isn't entirely wrong. These qualities and factors once were what made being a Feb so special. But times have changed. In fact, more than half of us who sat listening to that speech did not arrive late to Middlebury nor did we take an intentional gap semester.

Though Kaleb's speech captured much of the conflicted emotions of graduating, particularly during a pandemic, it also reinforced many of the Feb stereotypes. The words 'unique' and 'special,' words that are overfed to Febs by the college, were plentiful in the speech.

I began working for the Admissions Office as a tour guide and later became a senior admissions fellow for the office. I worked there long enough to know how we explain and market Febs to prospective students. Febs are go-getters and as we love to say, they aren't afraid to do things a little differently. As one of our admissions counselors is fond of saying in every one of his information sessions, being a Feb is a chance to get off the treadmill and try something new. While some of us got off the treadmill deliberately and for others of us it was more an experience of tripping, falling, and getting knocked off, we all graduated, and thus, we are all Febs.

Imbued in Feb exceptionalism and gatekeeping is not only an unhealthy sense of one's uniqueness, but an inability to recognize the privilege that comes with such a notion. A long-time stereotype of the Feb has been a white, wealthy and outdoorsy student. The admissions office does not publicly report official statistics on the Feb class, nor does it include the Feb class when reporting demographic statistics for incoming classes. This lack of transparent data is telling.

The class of 2021.5 graduation marked the first Feb graduation where the original Febs were in the minority but it may not be the last. Ultimately, many of us find ourselves graduating with a ".5" at the end of our class year despite our initial plans. It's high time we abandon the stereotype and expand who we think of as a Feb.



DALEELAH SALEH

On Febs and other mid-winter celebrations

Op-Ed

Ben Beese is a member of the class of 2021.5.

This week, four years ago, I took my first steps as a Middlebury student. My dean told me, the first of many times, that new Febs bring new energy to campus just when it's needed most. I was eager to see if this was true.

My first fall semester was my most difficult. I fell in love. I was inspired to become a better version of myself. I delved unintentionally into deep-seated insecurities. I got lost in making sense of myself and my life. I fell out of love. In short, I had experienced sophomore year, the storming phase of young adulthood.

The next spring, I became a Feb RA to watch the class of 2022.5 take their first steps on campus. My friends, the campus and I, were exhausted by the end of J-term. Then the Febs arrived. Sure enough, my dean's words proved true. Suddenly, the campus was full of energy in bleak contrast with the weather.

I needed a new start. My twentieth birthday — the end of my teenage years — was coming up in three months, April 2019, and I decided to become Ben 2.0. I threw my love into my new residents. They wouldn't be lonely in their first semester, if I could help it. I was going to put all of this hope into a Campus op-ed: "On Febs and Other Mid-Winter Celebrations."

I have always found it endearing that people across the world and through millennia have responded to the darkest days of the years with celebrations of light. Christians put up lights and greenery. Jews light menorahs. Diwali derives its name from Deepavali, referring to the holiday's hallmark rows of lamps. New Year — both Gregorian and Lunar — bursts with fireworks. Despite vastly different traditions across millennia and around the northern hemisphere, we have responded to darkness by creating our own light.

This is what I love about New Year's resolutions. A good resolution is a hope, an exciting sliver of optimism, that you can make your life better this year. We need to be reminded that life can change for the better. We forget as our hopes are washed by the tides of routine.

I never wrote the op-ed. I found myself whisked into the future — a summer job, a year abroad, a global pandemic, a thesis and (finally) a degree. Now, in the final hours of my final term, I'm looking back to see where I've been whisked to.

To my surprise, I haven't gone anywhere. Despite many changes, to the campus and to the student and employee population, I still live on the same 350 acres in Vermont. Even metaphorically, I wonder, what was the point of Middlebury?

The Greeks had a word for this "point." Telos refers to the end goal that justifies the process. Teleology is the study of a process in reference to its ultimate purpose. The telos of a Middlebury education is, at first glance, to receive a Middlebury degree. Yet, that degree only refers back to the process. My history degree, for instance, certifies that I have taken at least eleven history courses and Middlebury's distribution requirements. The degree testifies that I took classes at Middlebury. It gives no indication as to why.

At first, I was disappointed to realize this. A good friend of mine shared my feelings that we had been deceived. Many of us spent high school trying to get good grades, to be engaged in extra curriculars, to be generally "well-rounded" students. Elite colleges asked us applicants to be wunderkinder and we rose to the challenge.

> I have always found it endearing that people across the world and through millennia have responded to the darkest days of the years with celebrations of light.

By the time we arrived at Middlebury, we had made it, but the grind never let up. We had learned how to work towards a goal — getting into college. We drank the spirit of capitalism with our coffee. We took classes, received grades and met requirements. We continued to sacrifice our days, nights and personal lives to the gods of our education. We passed through a familiar chronology: orientation, first week, first semester, second semester, J-term, sophomore, junior and finally senior year. The current of our education swept us toward graduation. It felt that we were progressing. We might have missed, as I nearly did, the fact that our first year and last year at Middlebury are, from a curriculum standpoint, identical.

Our education has no teleology because Middlebury is not a process. Middlebury is a place and we are plants. We grow in response to the environment: the sun, the shade and the soil. The wines of our maturity will never lose their Middlebury terroir. And yet, the sun, the shade, and the soil don't exist to grow plants. In the sun, plants thrive and they shrivel. The soil doesn't conspire to flavor the wine nor is Middlebury ultimately responsible for our own growth. Every day is a co-production between ourselves and our environment.

In the words of the biblical book of Ecclesiastes, "to everything there is a season . . . a time to plant and a time to uproot." The exodus of the class of 2021.5 and the blossoming of the class of 2025.5, like all seasonal changes, gives us a moment to reflect. Ultimately, that's the point of winter celebrations. They remind us that new life is gestating. The plants are resting in their mid-winter dormancy. The trees shiver in their nakedness. They all are quietly preparing to flourish once more in the spring. I'm preparing to set new roots down in grad school and generally in my life after graduation. What spring are you preparing for?

Healthy relationship action month: What is it?

Op-Ed

__MiddSafe__ is an advocacy group dedicated to supporting students who have experienced sexual misconduct, dating violence and other issues of interpersonal violence at Middlebury.

Corresponding with Valentine's Day, February is Healthy Relationship Action Month. It is meant to encourage a focus on creating caring connections that help to foster positive mental and physical health. The support that positive relationships (romantic, platonic or otherwise) can provide has been proven to buffer stress, encourage the pursuit of opportunities and create a greater sense of meaning and purpose. As MiddSafe Advocates, promoting healthy relationships is a key element of our advocacy work. We hope to encourage positive relationships to prevent and mitigate the harms that can come from unhealthy behaviors in relationships. Unhealthy relationships can cause feelings of isolation, and if negative behaviors escalate the relationship can become abusive and all-consuming. For as much as healthy relationships can foster growth and self-embetterment, unhealthy relationships can make one feel trapped and can establish damaging patterns that are difficult to break. This month is a chance to celebrate healthy connections and good communication in all of your relationships.

Signs of a healthy relationship

Healthy relationships allow those in the relationship to feel supported and connected while still being independent. They rely on clear and open communication, compromise, honesty, trust and respect. They require equal effort from all parties, and a willingness to work through issues with care and consideration. Healthy relationships should bring out the best in you and make you feel good about yourself. No relationship is perfect, but below are some characteristics to strive for in all relationships.

Characteristics and behaviors of a healthy relationship:

1. Comfortable Pace: the relationship moves at a pace that feels good for all

2. Honesty: you feel like you can be candid without fear

3. Respect: everyone's beliefs and opinions are valued, and you feel loved for being who you are in all that you are

4. Kindness: you are caring and empathetic to one another and provide comfort and support

5. Healthy conflict: issues are discussed openly, respectfully and non-judgmentally

6. Trust: confidence that nothing will be done to hurt you or the relationship

7. Independence: there is space to be yourself outside the relationship

8. Equality: the relationship feels balanced, and everyone puts in the same effort

9. Taking Responsibility: owning up to your mistakes, actions and words

10. Fun: you enjoy spending time together and bring out the best in each other

Signs of a *potentially* unhealthy relationship

Unhealthy relationships involve one or more parties exhibiting behaviors that are not founded in mutual respect. Unhealthy relationships are not necessarily abusive relationships, but it is important to examine these behaviors in yourself and in your relationship so that they do not escalate to further harm. Unhealthy relationships aren't limited to romantic relationships. Friendships, relationships with family members and other bonds can also exhibit unhealthy characteristics. Knowing signs of unhealthy relationships and striving towards characteristics of healthy relationships can help keep yourself and others safe. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and to feel safe and happy in their relationships. If you notice yourself or others exhibiting one or more of these behaviors, if it feels safe, it is important to address them in an honest and respectful conversation. If you think you are in a dangerous situation, trust your gut and reach out for help.

Some signs of unhealthy relationships to look out for include:

Intensity: when someone expresses very extreme feelings and over-the-top behavior that feels overwhelming

Manipulation: when someone tries to control your decisions, actions emotions

Sabotage: when someone purposely ruins your reputation, achievements or success

Guilting: when someone makes you feel responsible for their actions or makes you feel like it is your job to make them happy

Deflecting Responsibility: when someone repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy behavior

Possessiveness: when someone is jealous to a point where they try to control who you spend time with and what you do

Isolation: when someone keeps you away from friends, family, or other people

Belittling: when someone does and says things to make you feel bad about yourself

Volatility: when someone has a really strong, unpredictable reaction that makes you feel scared, confused or intimidated

Betrayal: when someone is disloyal or acts in an intentionally dishonest way

What MiddSafe is and what we do

MiddSafe is an advocacy group, started in 2014, dedicated to supporting students who have experienced sexual misconduct, dating violence, stalking and other issues of interpersonal violence at Middlebury. We are a confidential resource for Middlebury students in need of support and information. MiddSafe advocates operate a 24/7 hotline while classes are in session, but are also (pending the lifting of certain Covid-19 restrictions) typically available for in-person meetings. As empathic listeners, advocates offer a safe, non-judgmental support system for students in both emergency and non-crisis situations. We are state-certified rape crisis workers trained to guide students through resources on a local, state and national level.

If you or someone you know is experiencing violence, abuse, stalking or is struggling in an unhealthy relationship, please seek out one or more of the below resources:

MiddSafe
(802) 377-0239
MiddSafe's Online Advocate
go/onlineadvocate
Survivor Toolkit
go/survivortoolkit
WomenSafe (Addison County Sexual Violence Crisis Line)
(802) 388-4205
RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network)
(800) 656-4673

In support of Senate Bill S.148

Letter to the Editor

__Kyle Hooker__ is a member of the class of 2024 and a member of Sunrise Middlebury, a hub fighting for climate justice in Vermont.

I am writing on behalf of Sunrise Middlebury, a chapter of the national Sunrise Movement youth climate activist group. We would like to express our support for senate bill S.148, an act relating to environmental justice in Vermont. In summary, the bill will establish a framework that will guide and stimulate action on long-term work in the fight against climate change, initiating larger conversations about environmental justice. Marginalized communities in Vermont should not only be represented, but specifically addressed, within Vermont's environmental policy. Senator Ram Hinsdale's S.148 does exactly this by focusing on the housing, food, transportation, and other environmental inequalities experienced by economically and racially disadvantaged communities.

It is vital that this bill passes in its entirety with bipartisan support and is backed by a strong budget. Despite the mandate by the state's 2021 Environmental Justice Act to introduce a plan to address environmental injustice, Vermont remains without a statewide policy addressing environmental justice, one of the most essential components of climate change action. Sunrise Middlebury strongly supports the legislature passing this bill and Gov. Phil Scott signing it.

Sunrise Middlebury urges all Vermont residents to express their support for S.148 to their elected officials as well as when voting in Vermont's 2022 house race in November. You can identify your elected officials at https://legislature.vermont.gov/people/all/2022. Our response to a changing climate must recognize those most impacted, namely low-income folks and people of color.

If interested in environmental justice and supporting S. 148, please consider attending Middlebury's sunrise meetings at 6 p.m. in Hillcrest 103 on Thursdays or remotely at go/sunrisemeeting. You can also contact us at team@midd.smvmt.org if you have any questions.

A letter to the class of 2021.5

Op-Ed

__Tia Pogue__ is a member of the class of 2021.5.

Middlebury has taught me a lot. After attending this elite liberal arts academic institution for eight semesters over four and a half years, I sure hope I'm smarter than when I started, and that you are all, too.

But as I write this, there are still a lot of things I don't know. I don't know whether Gamaliel Painter's cane is allowed as a carry-on, or how much it goes for on eBay. I don't know exactly what I'm going to do with that psych degree (and I'm still bummed they never taught me mind control in my senior seminar). I don't know what I'm doing after graduation, or which one of you I'll drunkenly hook up with at our five year reunion.

However, there are some things I do know. I know that I require exactly one cup of Earl Grey tea for every page of an essay I write, and that apparently eight semesters at Middlebury was not long enough to learn how to finish my assignments more than five minutes before the deadline. I know for a fact that Proctor is the best dining hall, even though as a first-year I was certain that it was Ross. I know that getting tested for Covid-19 at Middlebury College requires no fewer than six hand sanitations, and I know that you should never, ever – and I mean never – try getting lunch at 12:15 on a Tuesday.

I know that many of us aren't exactly where we expected to be. Our time in college has looked different from what once imagined. Like most graduating classes, we've changed majors, or joined new clubs during our junior year, or taken surprisingly life-changing classes, sure. But many of us weren't expecting to be Febs at all: some of us were unexpectedly admitted that way (maybe even involuntarily); for others, like me, this year more than others, we are here because other things didn't go exactly as planned: we took time off for health, or a cool opportunity, or remember that time that global pandemic came out of nowhere for the first time in a century? That was fun.

I know that being a Feb is a strange and challenging experience, from always being one day behind on registration, to being routinely left out on emails sent from the office of the president, to trying to explain to your great-uncle at Thanksgiving why no, you still don't have a job, because no, you still haven't graduated yet – and that's normal, I promise.

I know Middlebury College is hard. I also know that attending college in a pandemic is a strange and challenging experience, with remote classes, and constant change. I know that with these unexpected changes came unexpected losses, from the discrete to intangible: of study abroad plans and internships, of loved ones, of graduating with the people with whom we started our Midd journeys, of turning 21 and being able to go out to a bar that isn't locked down due to Covid (true story...).

I'm also pretty sure that the experience of the class of 2021.5 specifically might be the strangest and most challenging of all. We are the largest Feb graduating class ever, with nearly 200 in our ranks, and many changes from the original Feb class. We have spent the second half of college in a pandemic (and those of us who febbed ourselves have spent nearly that whole time trying to remember the difference between senior Feb and super senior Feb). Even starting at Middlebury was uniquely challenging for the class of 2021.5: there's no doubt that this experience is burned into the memories of those who underwent it, but

> Not only did we graduate from Middlebury, as Febs, but we did it when the world was falling apart.

for the rest of you reading, or for those who have repressed it, let me remind you that the class of 2021.5 moved in during a freaking blizzard — as if starting college wasn't hard enough!

I think it's important to acknowledge how hard it has been for the class of 2021.5, and to mourn the losses of all that we thought might be. But I also think it's important to acknowledge, despite everything, that we freaking made it. Not only did we graduate from Middlebury, as Febs, but we did it when the world was falling apart. We did it during yet another pandemic peak, and we did it after yet another massive snowstorm hit right before the ceremony–Mother Nature's funny attempt at bookending, I guess.

We did it because we had to, but... we also did it because we are resilient, and brilliant, and flexible, and strong. We wrote essays, and took tests, and took covid tests, and we have battled strange and unprecedented times to make it here. We should be so proud.

I wasn't originally expecting to graduate from Middlebury as a Feb, but I am grateful. I am grateful for the college that brought us back in person for our final term; I am grateful to all of the wonderful souls at Middlebury who have shared their wisdom and encouragement with me over the years; and I am grateful to my fellow Febs who made it there with me and embraced me as a member of this class.

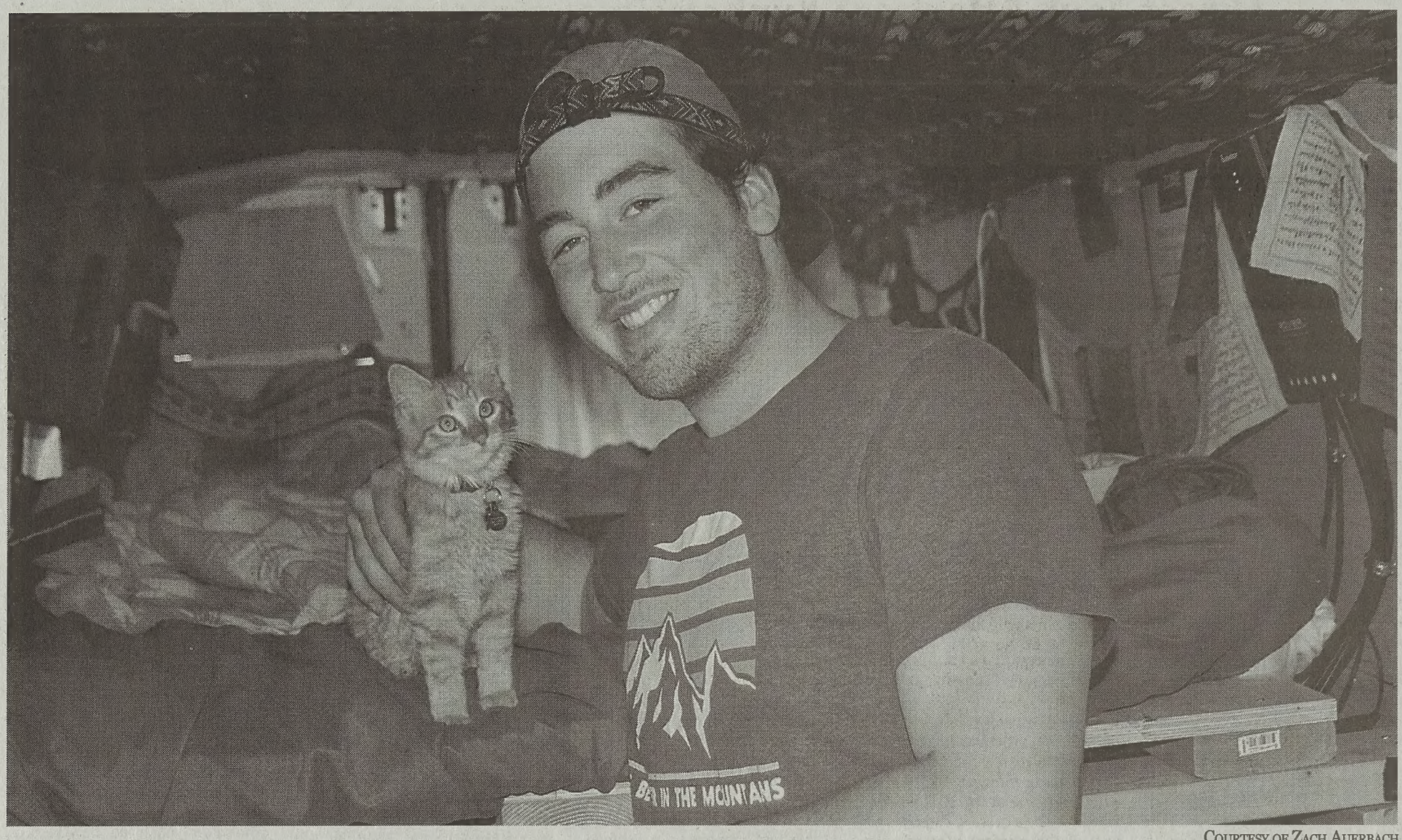
I don't know a lot, but....If there's one thing that I've learned at Middlebury, it's that while our losses are real, our unexpected challenges have led to unexpected meaning. I have gotten so much from being a Feb and a member of 2021.5 that I never anticipated. Each hug I've gotten this semester has meant more to me than before the era of six feet apart, and each shared meal has tasted sweeter with company that I now value more dearly. I am grateful for the gift of an extra semester to spend with all of you, and I am prouder of our diplomas knowing what we faced to get them.

I hope we can look back at our time at Middlebury not with disappointment that our Proc crushes didn't love us back, but with appreciation for this class, for ourselves and our perseverance, for all of the lessons that we have learned, and for the unexpected and serendipitous beauty that we have experienced. I know that our time at Middlebury may be ending, but I also know that we are young and at an exciting juncture in our lives. I believe that meaning is not finite, and that we now have a choice to make: as we leave Vermont, no matter how we choose to spend our lives, I hope we choose to make as much meaning as we possibly can.

I wish you joy, success, and fantastic five-year reunion hookups. Thanks, and congrats, class of 2021.5. Go live amazing lives.

COURTESY OF TIA POGUE

The class of 2021.5 celebrates graduation at the Snow Bowl.



COURTESY OF ZACH AUERBACH

After dropping out of Middlebury, Zach Auerbach traveled the country in his van with only his pet cat Yosemite.

Tales of a Middlebury dropout's life on the road coming soon in "Van's Best Friend"

By ALEXANDRA BURNS
Staff Writer

"I dropped out of college when I was nineteen. I had no real goals for my future, and I felt like I was sort of drifting through life," Zach Auerbach says in the video on his Kickstarter page. He is looking directly into the camera, dressed in a worn-in t-shirt and a flannel, with a cluttered bookshelf in the background.

Auerbach is in the process of self-publishing a book he has titled "Van's Best Friend" about the two years he spent traveling around the U.S. in a van after "dropping out" — a term he wears proudly — from Middlebury College. He matriculated at Middlebury in the fall of 2018, but struggled with the academic structure of his classes and ended up leaving before the semester ended. He returned to his hometown just outside of Chicago for several months, and began scouring the internet for a van that he could convert into a home. By May of 2019, he was on the road.

When he first got home, Auerbach's parents were supportive, but he struggled to figure out what was next. Having grown up in a town with a high school where 95% of graduating seniors went on to college, it was challenging for him to imagine a different future.

"College was always pushed on us and seemed like the only option after high school. There was a lot of weird stigma around being a dropout," he explained.

From a young age, Auerbach had a dream of traveling around the country, and this seemed like the right moment. He spent some time browsing an internet of vans that weren't quite right, as he needed the van to be able to travel long distances and be large enough to install a kitchenette and a bed. Eventually, he came across a Dodge Sprinter in his price range, and after a green spray paint job and some major renovations, the "Lazy Express" was born.

In designing his initial route on the road, Auerbach sought a path that would allow him to reach as many national parks as possible. He headed west from Chicago, snaking around the northern edge of several states and visiting Glacier National Park, continuing further west to the parks in Washington state.

Not all of his journey fit under the Instagrammable #vanlife ideal. Though Auerbach was able to sustain himself in large part in the van, he needed to save up money to continue his travels, and he spent the 2019 holiday season working at a Macy's in southern California. He also faced the new challenge of living completely alone.

"When I started out, it was pretty lonely. So when I got to California, I adopted a kitten and I traveled with him for a little over a year. His name is Yosemite, and we hit like 30 national parks together."

Throughout the more than two years he spent living in the Lazy Express, Auerbach took photos and journaled constantly. On his personal website, he has organized his nature photography by location, and he encourages readers of the book to periodically visit the website to view photos that correspond with the chapter they're reading. He also created a map of his van route. Auerbach often ventured out for a few months at a time and then spent brief stints back at home.

"[The map] kind of looks like a spiderweb that all leads back to Chicago," said Auerbach.

His journey ended after two years and four months, having visited fifty of the 63 national parks and many more cities and towns in between.

Auerbach's book is set up in the format of journal entries, marked by date and location. While on the road, Auerbach journaled frequently, but he explained that the contents of the book are not simply extracted journal entries.

"The journal was extremely, extremely raw," he said. "I was often writing in it at the end of the day, and I was exhausted from whatever hiking I was doing. A lot of it doesn't really make sense if you read the actual journal. So it took a ton of editing."

Auerbach began the editing process in early October, and it is still ongoing. He hopes the Kickstarter page will offset the costs of self-publishing by allowing people to pre-order the book. Some costs included paying for an editor, paying for the cover design and paying for the printing of the book.

These days, Auerbach is back in Vermont, living and working at a farm in East Middlebury with his cat Yosemite. He hopes to stay in Middlebury through May before returning home to visit family.

"It's nice to live where you work," Auerbach remarked, "I just get up in the morning and do my chores and it's been a really great place to write."

To pre-order a copy of "Van's Best Friend", you can visit Auerbach's website at http://ZachAuerbach.com.

NOBUNTU: SINGING, DANCING AND HEALING

By BRETT SORBO
Contributing Writer

Hailing from southwestern Zimbabwe, the a cappella quintet Nobuntu could have been enjoying the frequent sun and 80-degree days that usually mark this time of year at home. Instead, they chose to travel to Vermont to perform for the Middlebury community on Feb. 18.

Zanele Manhenga, the de-facto emcee, addressed this matter to the crowd in Robison Hall after their opening number.

"I have a serious question: How do you all live in this weather?" Manhenga asked, which resulted in peals of laughter from the crowd.

Humor was just one of Nobuntu's many forms of expressions that evening as they engaged the audience with a musical repertoire composed of original songs, traditional Zimbabwean folk standards and African-American spirituals.

The word Nobuntu directly translates to "mother of humanity" in Ndebele, one of Zimbabwe's 16 official languages. To the group's members, it is an idea that embodies "humbleness, love, purpose, unity and family from a woman's perspective." They choose to explore these values through music, which they see as a crucial vehicle for social change. Thus, many of their songs' lyrics center on issues of race, religion, abuse and gender.

As a way to access these topics, much of the group's music portrays basic human emotions like kindness, pain, courage and faith. During the performance, Manhenga introduced each song by explaining what it means to them and their culture. These descriptions often came out as passionate statements that urged the audience to join them in a greater social cause.

From a musical perspective, Nobuntu did everything with ease. Their harmonies soared and their dynamics were perfect, yet the most notable achievements of their performance was their ability to generate polyrhythms (when multiple rhythmic patterns are layered) and to change these rhythms and the tempo at a moment's notice. All five members were cued into exactly what they needed to do. There was no inkling of stage fright — in fact, they would fist bump and high five each other in the middle of the performance as if they were having a casual conversation.

Nobuntu marked many of their songs with some kind of choreography. Standing in line behind their microphones, they would slightly bend their knees to the beat, sway their bodies in the same direction or make matching gestures with their arms. If a song concerned love or hope, they would lay their arms open in front of their bodies, with their palms turned upwards, and bring them back into a self-embrace. If a song praised 'the Almighty' or 'the Creator,' then they would lift their arms above their heads. Other songs gave way to energetic, full-body performances, where one or two of the singers would emerge past the microphone stands to dance. In one song, two members danced to mimic horses, waving horsetail sticks around their bodies while performing galloping motions.

They kept a number of percussion instruments readily accessible so that they could stimulate these dances, including a hand-drum, tambourine, shakers and mbira (thumb piano). The instruments created a groove for the dancer to step with, to which the dancer would add noises from shaking wooden beads that were wrapped around their ankles. In these moments, the music and dancing were symbiotic, accentuating one another and amplifying the energy in the room.

COURTESY PHOTO

Nobuntu warmed audiences up with their beautiful singing and welcoming spirit.

Nobuntu's songs were also notably feminist, as they wrestled with the mistreatment of women in their culture and the ways in which women are socialized to become housewives. One of their songs in particular, "Moya Moya," concerns the story of a woman who is infertile and has to reckon with the antipathy that her society holds toward barren women. During the song, Nobuntu singer Heather Dube acted out this situation, falling to the ground screaming in agony at the front of the stage.

Toward the end of the show, Nobuntu offered the audience an interactive experience by teaching how to sing a part of their original song, "Nobuntu Click Song." The Ndebele language includes clicks, which often surround vowel sounds. First, they had everyone try to produce these clicks; then, once everyone had the sound down, they slowly pronounced the line that they were to sing. Although it took a few attempts for the auditorium to unify, Dube, who led the exercise, congratulated everyone on being quick learners.

> So just as Middlebury had invited Nobuntu up to the freezing cold weather, Nobuntu invited us into the warmth of their sisterhood...

So, just as Middlebury had invited Nobuntu up to the freezing cold weather, Nobuntu invited us into the warmth of their sisterhood, showing us the musical experience that they believe can heal the world.

Direct Your Attention: Euphoria's conspicuous unrealism

By OWEN MASON-HILL
Arts & Culture Editor

Editor's Note: This article contains spoilers through episode six of "Euphoria" season two.

"Euphoria" is a difficult show to watch. Seventeen-year-old girls overdose on heroin. Parents assault their children and sexually assault their children's underage friends. Families are dysfunctional at best and downright dangerous at worst. There isn't a single moral character on the show, at least from the main cast of high schoolers. But for all its drugs, violence, trauma and emotional torture, my eyes are glued to the screen.

"Euphoria's" casting is immaculate. And rightfully so for a show built entirely around its cohort of high school students. The show goes to great lengths to cultivate and maintain its array of equally presented characters, despite having a protagonist narrator in Rue (Zendaya). Though Rue dictates the pace of the show, it is in her subjective narration that the show first reveals itself to be a show about unrealism.

Unlike many TV shows that feature a cast of characters, viewers of "Euphoria" can be fans of any single character and make a legitimate case for why they're the protagonist. Clearly, Rue reigns supreme, yet in season two, "Euphoria" devotes whole episodes to Cal's backstory (Eric Dane), the love triangle between Nate (Jacob Elordi), Maddy (Alex Demie) and Cassie (Sydney Sweeney) as well as to the budding relationship between Jules (Hunter Schafer) and Elliot (Dominic Fike) without much mention of Rue in-between.

To maintain balance in this cast of immensely emotionally-intense characters, the show goes to great lengths to align viewers with them. Nothing — besides the show's cast — has garnered widespread attention quite like its jaw-dropping makeup and wardrobe display. These departments, spearheaded by Doniella Davy and Heidi Bivens respectively, are working in overdrive, each receiving Emmy nods for the show's first season. With so many characters deeply entwined in the show's plot, their screen time is divided. So, to align viewers with the characters, the show made flamboyant and conspicuous costumes and makeup decisions that enhance the show's readability.

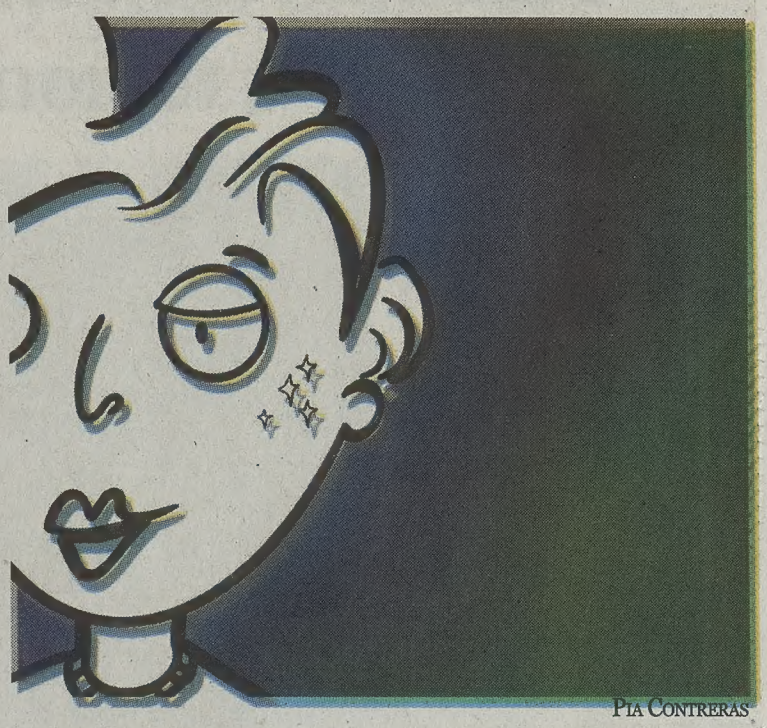
In one montage in which Cassie tries to draw the attention of her crush, Nate, Cassie arrives to school each day with a more laborious skincare routine, a more exaggerated face of makeup and a stylistically unique outfit. Normally, a viewer of a scene like this would question how Cassie has time to do all this skincare, to master all these makeup techniques overnight, to purchase a new outfit. One could imagine asking themselves: "Does no one else see her outfit right now?" The show even pokes fun at this in a scene in which Cassie's dress is confused for part of the wardrobe for the play "Oklahoma."

Yet in "Euphoria," viewers don't pay it any mind. To see Maddy blow out her birthday candles in a black slip Marc Jacobs dress with white ruffle trim and dangling "M" pins seemingly right off the runway feels entirely natural and goes unquestioned. Much like in a cartoon, a character's emotional interior and external personality is expressed through their wardrobe, yet in as unsubtle a way as is possible. Cassie desperately seeks attention and validation from both Nate and her friends, so her outfits are among the most complex and theatrical. After a traumatic and disheartening season one, Jules's hyper-pop, baby-doll aesthetic has been darkened, her hair cut to match Kurt Cobain's grunge mentality and the light pinks and blues have been traded out for whites, soft hues and blacks. In all, the aesthetics of "Euphoria's" characters are among the primary modes in which viewers can understand shifts in personality, viewpoint and mentality.

The show enhances this elaborate aesthetic with an even more elaborate lighting and cinematographic style. While season one coined the "Euphoria" style with its unique use of bright blues and purples, season two seems to soften the color and tone up the conspicuous through other avenues. Camera movements become more rapid and obvious, using quick zooms during dramatic scenes (especially during the season's dramatic zenith in episode 5 in Cassie's house) to draw viewers attention to reactions. Lighting is at one moment believable and then at the next all too convenient. The golden hue of the fading sunlight always just happens to lie perfectly over a character's face. When Lexi (Maude Apatow) begins to wonder about her sister's 4 a.m. activities, the yellow morning light falls harshly over Cassie's empty bed, drawing the viewer's eye to it undescretely.

In the season premiere, once each character has been reintroduced to viewers through one way or another, a dramatic fight happens between two characters that stuns partygoers. In this moment, the show takes slow-motion, flash-photography-like shots of each of the show's main characters, freezing them in time and in place. The scene is beautiful, so much so that I've rewound it and shown it to friends that don't watch the show (no, I don't know what they're doing with their time either). The show wants viewers to know what their characters are thinking at all times, a task both difficult and essential for a cast of this size.

"Euphoria's" conspicuous, deliberately non-Hollywood style is an essential feature for a show devoted to maintaining a main character list in the tens. The effect of this has both strengthened the mass appeal of the show's cast as well as made it all the more melodramatic to watch. "Euphoria's" cast may be the ones getting all the attention, but the show will be rewatched for years because of its unparalleled visual language.

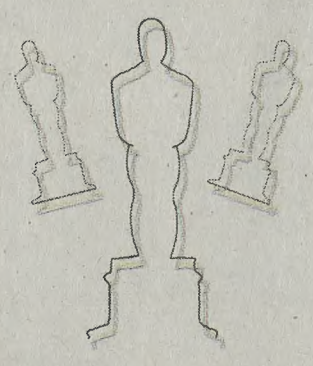


Pia Contreras

Season two of "Euphoria" expands on the theatrical, over-the-top imagery and production design of season one to draw attention to the show's main attraction: its characters.

Oscars 2022 breakdowns, hopes and predictions for three (less covered) awards

By JACK TORPEY
Contributing Writer



Sabrina Templeton

Oscar nominations were announced on Feb. 8, making public the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science's choices for the most artistically and technically significant films of 2021. It's a tradition for journalists covering the Academy Awards to quickly zero in on the major categories like Best Picture and Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role. This year, however, the most remarkable achievements in film belonged to three of the less celebrated elements of filmmaking: music scoring, cinematography and screenwriting. The creators who carry out these functions never get the press that is levied upon the actors and directors they collaborate with, but in an artistic medium of stories told with moving images and sound, their music, photography and writing arguably play the most vital role of all. This was never more true than in 2021, and to prove that, here are my breakdowns, hopes and predictions for Best Original Score, Best Cinematography and Best Adapted Screenplay. And yes, my hopes and predictions are the same; "Dune" and "The Power of the Dog" are that good.

Original Score

There is no nominee more overdue for an Oscar win this year than Hans Zimmer. For over three decades, the German film composer has been the most influential musical figure in Hollywood, producing countless iconic scores for films such as "Gladiator," "The Dark Knight" and "Interstellar." But after winning for 1994's "The Lion King," Zimmer has been repeatedly snubbed by the academy, even as his scores continue to define what movies sound like in the 21st century. This year, Zimmer is nominated for scoring Denis Villeneuve's science-fiction epic "Dune," a film whose thrilling imagery is deeply enhanced by the composer's unnerving, otherworldly music. It is one of Zimmer's most experimental compositions to date, featuring instruments that he invented specifically for the film. Still, it maintains the all-encompassing quality that often makes his music the most memorable part of the films he scores. Nominated alongside Zimmer is Jonny Greenwood for his work on "The Power of the Dog," a Western psychodrama with a fittingly unsettling banjo-centric score. Greenwood is Zimmer's biggest threat this year, but if the academy accepts how indispensable Zimmer's music is to "Dune" — and to the modern Hollywood blockbuster at large — he will walk away from the ceremony on March 27 with his long-awaited second Oscar.

My hope: Dune (Hans Zimmer)
My prediction: Dune (Hans Zimmer)

Cinematography

For those who go to the movies for a powerful visual experience, 2021 was a treat. Whether it's Bruno Delbonnel's stark, black-and-white Shakespeare rendition in Joel Coen's "The Tragedy of Macbeth" or Ari Wegner's panoramic portrayal of New Zealand as the American West in Jane Campion's "The Power of the Dog," any one of this year's five Oscar nominees for Best Cinematography could win and have rightly earned the award. But when a science-fiction story set on an alien desert planet is filmed in the closest thing on earth to an alien desert, that deserves to be recognized. Working with director Denis Villeneuve, who insisted that the movie be shot on location and without green screens, cinematographer Greig Fraser filmed "Dune" in the expansive Wadi Rum desert in Jordan and the endless sand dunes of the Rub' al Khali. The result is one of the most visually striking science-fiction films ever made, with a blend of sprawling physical landscapes and computer-generated images that vividly bring to life the images that Frank Herbert conjured in his mind when writing the book in the sixties. Audiences walking into "Dune" expecting to see two and a half hours of bright sunlight on sand were likely shocked to find that Fraser and Villeneuve chose to set long stretches of the action in the dark of night. This was a daring decision given the vibrant shooting location at their disposal, but it more than paid off. Not only do the night scenes allow Fraser to illuminate the screen with the blaze of burning palm trees and the eerie glow of alien technology, but when the beige dunes reemerge under the sun, the transition from the dark to the blinding light grants the audience the uncanny feeling of actually stepping into the desert. Unless the academy voters fall for Wegner's beautiful portrait of untamed 1925 Montana in "The Power of the Dog" over the more extraterrestrial imagery of "Dune," Fraser should be on his way to his first Oscar win.

My hope: Dune (Greig Fraser)
My prediction: Dune (Greig Fraser)

Adapted Screenplay

Good writing is what grants a film lasting emotional power, and Jane Campion's script for "The Power of the Dog" is the most powerful piece of film writing accomplished this year. Her story of a cruel rancher (Benedict Cumberbatch) engaged in a psychological battle with his brother's gay stepson (Kodi Smit-McPhee) is a disturbing yet moving tale of masculinity and love that ends with one of the most brutally subtle twists in decades. Denis Villeneuve, Eric Roth and Jon Spaihts will be considered for how seamlessly they adapted the massive "Dune" to the big screen, and Sian Heder's heartfelt account of a child of deaf adults coming of age in "CODA" will certainly earn her supporters. But Campion wrote "The Power of the Dog" with such incredible restraint, letting the intensity of the plot slowly build through quiet moments that speak just as clearly as her rich dialogue, that this feels like her Oscar to lose.

My hope: The Power of the Dog (Jane Campion)
My prediction: The Power of the Dog (Jane Campion)

Tune in to see the winners when the 94th Academy Awards air on March 27 at 8PM ET on ABC.

An Interview with Midd's littlest student

Continued from Page 1

summer and next spring so you'll have to hear more about that on @littlemanoncampus when the time comes!

***C:** You are very supportive of your followers. Are you able to give yourself that same support and acceptance? Who inspires you?*

LM: Thank you for asking that! It's an important question because I think it can always be easier to be kind to others than to yourself. We're often more critical of ourselves than of the people around us, but I really try to show myself that same kind of love even though it's difficult sometimes. It's just so important to value and love yourself, but it's just as essential to recognize how hard that can be sometimes! I love myself, and it will be a continuous process to keep making sure I remember that!

I don't want to say I have one single inspiration, because people are constantly surprising and inspiring me. I also surprise and inspire myself, and am so happy to be able to grow and learn from myself and all those around me.

***C:** What are a few of your favorite interests?*

LM: I love sitting politely more than anything else! Besides that, I'm a big fan of woodworking, collecting hats, modeling, making friends and sharing my thoughts with the world!

***C:** How was your first Winter Carnival?*

LM: It was fantastic! I had so much fun and I enjoyed getting to know a new side of Middlebury!

C: Do you have any wisdom for us today?

LM: Don't be afraid to change and grow! Taking on new challenges can be scary, but you all possess everything you need to tackle them. The world is your oyster, and I can't wait to see what you take on!

~

Now, some background on the women behind the little man. Aine Powers '24 and Maggie Blake '24 were playing with clay one day at Ceramics Club when the idea for Little Man molded its way into Aine's hands.

"The clay seemed to guide me into making him and Maggie sensed he needed a chair to sit upon so she made him one. When we finally did have him in front of us, we could just tell he had a story to tell and that grew into what he is today," Powers said. For her, his existence is a reminder of the beauty in the little things. For Blake, Little Man's joy and love is inspiring.

Little Man's Instagram takeover showed Powers and Blake that Little Man was no longer just special to them and their friends. "It's really funny to hear people mention him and not necessarily know us. When we posted a picture of him on the bus to the Snow Bowl during our takeover of the Middlebury account we heard someone say 'Little Man is on our bus!' after they saw it. which we loved," the two said.

In addition to being well-received on campus, their posts have garnered attention from Blundstone USA's official Instagram account. Blake is Little Man's official photographer, but he is far from her first subject.

"I've been doing photography for a while as a hobby and as a little business, and obviously Little Man is the perfect muse," Blake said. Check out her photography page @mblake.photography

"Making [Little Man] brought us so much joy and just the idea of this simple little polite guy who can politely sit anywhere making his mark on the world really fuels his existence further," Powers and Blake said. The two creators would love for Little Man to spread his message to even more people, and he's even pursuing a relevant academic path; Little Man designed his own Independent Scholar major: Kindness with a concentration in Politeness.

Courtesy of Maggie Blake '24

After becoming a social media sensation, Little Man took over the college's official instagram account to spread positivity during Winter Carnival.

Club Nordic continues to grow, impresses at regional championship

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor At Large

COURTESY OF MARY NAGY-BENSON

Middlebury Club Nordic posing after a race.

Middlebury's up-and-coming Club Nordic team wrapped up their racing season this past weekend at the Eastern Collegiate Ski Conference Regional Championship meet. In addition to a competitive racing season, the student-led club also organized free ski lessons and gear rentals throughout January and February to help new skiers get started.

The Club Nordic team has existed for years, but in 2019, Acadia Hegedus '22 saw a need for a more structured training and racing program. She recruited a few members interested in racing, and since then, the club has grown to about 25 members who practice regularly and attend competitions.

The racing team is completely student-run, with six board members who develop training plans and rotate leading practices. In September, the team starts working out with roller skiing, running and weight lifting workouts before they have six to seven weekends of racing in January and February. Hegedus oversees the club as its President.

Middlebury Club Nordic had a strong final showing at the Eastern Collegiate Ski Conference Regional Championship meet, hosted at Gore Mountain (North Creek, N.Y.). Leah Mowry '24.5 and Sylvie Linck '24.5 placed fifth and tenth respectively, and Grady Welsh '24 finished 14th on the men's side.

"The last race went really well––we all crushed it at Gore Mountain," Helen Vaughan '24.5 said. "It was pretty tough since it's on the side of a downhill mountain, but we kept each other entertained and had lots of fun cheering for the boys afterward."

Mary Nagy-Benson '24.5 raced in high school and wanted to continue working out and racing in a fun but competitive atmosphere. "I was so surprised by the competition," Nagy-Benson said. "There are so many skiers in Vermont. It's really fun to get together and race."

"There's not a lot of pressure, but it's still competitive, fun and inclusive," Per Alexander '24.5 added.

Club Nordic welcomes members of all abilities and facilitates free gear rentals and ski lessons for new skiers. The ski shop, located in the Bike Room at Adirondack House, is open two nights a week during the winter months, where students can rent poles, boots and skis. Students can also wax their skis for free.

"It's a cool way to see skiers who aren't part of the racing club," Alexander, who also works at the rental room, said. "There are so many people who cross country ski on campus who don't race. I worked in a ski rental shop over my Febmester, and so it's fun to do something like that again."

The team also organized ski lessons throughout J-term, allowing students to try Nordic skiing and earn PE credit in the process. "It's fun to share your enthusiasm for the sport, and we could really see improvement over our lessons which was exciting," Mowry, who worked as an instructor, said.

Hegedus, who recently designed unique Middlebury racing suits for the club, is excited by the team's growth. She also expressed interest in having a coach to add more structure as more members continue to join the club.

"We're in Vermont. We're literally one of the best places in the country to go Nordic skiing," Hegedus said. "I think having a coach and having some more adult support would be really nice to be able to support all of the students who want to make this a part of their Middlebury experience."

Through Club Nordic, Nagy-Benson has enjoyed meeting a new community of eager skiers. "The influx of sophomores and sophomores Febs has breathed a lot of life into the program. With that energy, we'll be able to recruit more people and have a big team."

Ultimately, Hegedus has been grateful to foster an all-inclusive environment that accepts everyone and aims to help cultivate a passion for the sport.

"I'm really thankful to have been able to build up this team, and I really hope that next year, and in the coming year, it keeps going," Hegedus said. "We wouldn't be where we are without student leaders."

Ali Nullmeyer '24 and Michel Macedo '22.5 compete in slalom races at Beijing Olympics

Continued from Page 1

like Middlebury."

Outside of skiing, Nullmeyer and Macedo's experiences at the Olympics were less than conventional. Due to restrictions to prevent the spread of Covid-19, athletes wore masks on almost all occasions outside of competition, were tested every day and mostly interacted with athletes from their country or sport.

Macedo, having participated in the 2018 Winter Games, was especially aware of how different this year's games felt compared to a conventional Olympics.

"I couldn't experience any of China as a country," Macedo said. "When I went to Korea, I got to go to restaurants, walk around the town and see the culture, but this Olympics was completely shut off."

However, the athletes still made the best of their time in Beijing. Nullmeyer says that she was able to trade pins with other athletes and learn the behind the scenes aspects of other sports from other Canadian athletes.

Olympic competition also gave Nullmeyer and Macedo a sense of pride with the opportunity to represent their countries––something they are unable to experience at the collegiate level. For Macedo — Brazil's top medalist in official Alpine skiing events with a total of 12 medals — Olympic skiing is not only an opportunity to represent his country but also an opportunity to change narratives about Brazil.

"Brazil's not considered a Winter sport nation at all, but I have a desire to change that," Macedo said. "People can be good skiers from Brazil."

Leaving with positive experiences, Macedo and Nullmeyer are eager to compete in future Olympics.

"I'm hoping to finish the year with some solid results and keep building toward future seasons and the next Olympics," Nullmeyer said.

COURTESY PHOTO

Ali Nullmeyer '24 competes in the slalom race at the Beijing Winter Olympics.

PFL Weekly: Middlebury sports podcast debuts this semester

By BLAISE SIEFER
Senior Sports Editor

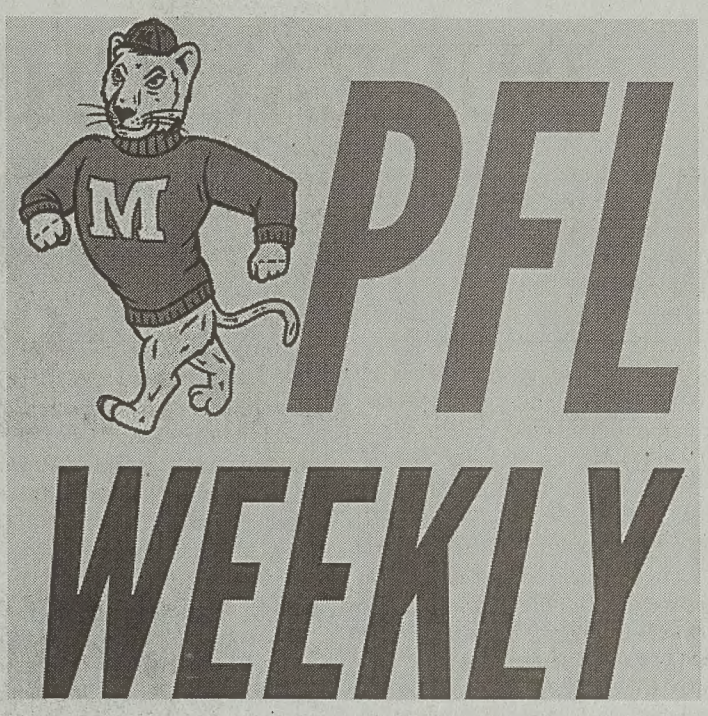
Attention all Panther sports fans! A new podcast is coming to The Campus: PFL Weekly. Hosted by Blaise Siefer '23.5, Marco Fengler '23, Captain Rudolph '23.5 and Eli DiBari '24, Panthers for Life (PFL) Weekly tells the biggest sports stories each week. New episodes are released on Tuesdays.

The podcast, which can be found on all major listening platforms, will cover all in-season varsity teams, as well as clubs. Episodes will run 10–15 minutes and include interviews with players and coaches.

In our first episode, we recap Max Cluss's '23 4:07 mile, women's hockey's undefeated regular season and Winter Carnival. Marco's sports stat of the week includes... jellybeans? The crew names their Panther All-Stars of the week and finishes with a rundown on games you can't miss this weekend! Plus, a trivia question on first-year women's basketball phenom, Alexa Mustafaj '25.

THE PODCAST IS AVAILABLE ON APPLE MUSIC AND SPOTIFY.

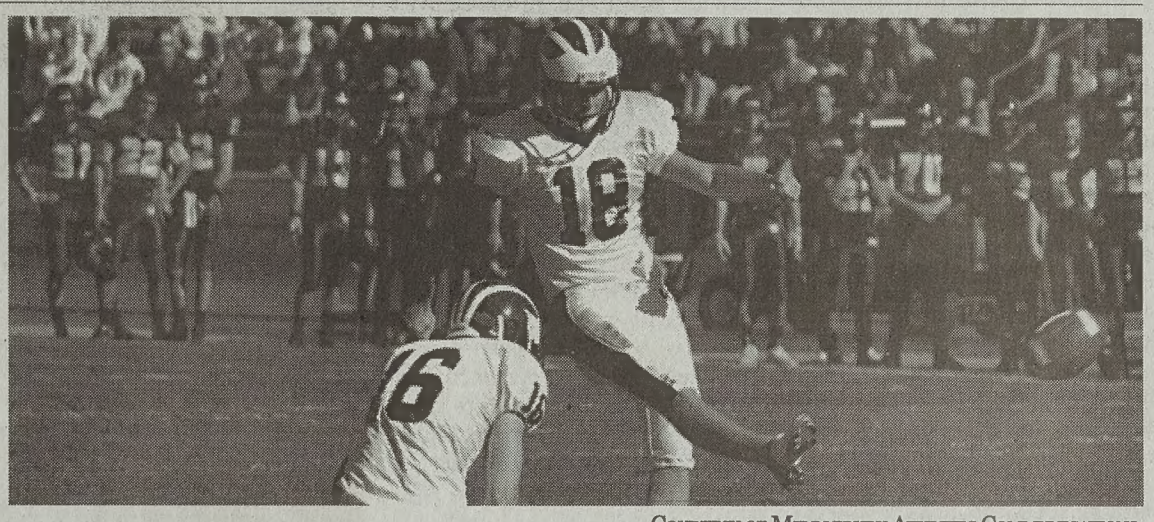
SCAN THE CODE TO LISTEN TO THE PFL WEEKLY PODCAST ON SPOTIFY.



Siefer's Scoop podcast: Steve Hauschka '07, Middlebury football kicker, 2014 Super Bowl champion

By BLAISE SEIFER
Senior Sports Editor

On the first Siefer's Scoop episode of the spring semester, Steve Hauschka '07 appears on the podcast. Originally a JV soccer player at Middlebury, Hauschka joined the football team his sophomore year and immediately became a star. After graduating, Hauschka played one graduate season at North Carolina State before embarking on a 13-year NFL career. On this episode, Hauschka discusses his four years at Middlebury, his path to the NFL and what it was like to play in — and win — a Super Bowl in 2014.



COURTESY OF MIDDLEBURY ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

Steve Hauschka '07 started playing football when he was a sophomore at Middlebury College. As a Panther, he set program records in career field goals (20) and most field goals in a season (10).

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH SANTI CANELLA '25, MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

COURTESY OF MIDDLEBURY ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

Santi Canella bounds forward in the triple jump during the Middlebury Winter Classic on Jan. 15.

By OWEN PARK
Contributing Writer

Santi Canella '25 from New York City is jumping in his first season on the men's track and field team and has jumped straight into the school record books in the triple jump. In this installment of "Seven Questions," Canella discusses his introduction to track and field, the successes and challenges of being a jumper and those that helped him make it to Middlebury.

Owen Park: *What caused you to start participating in track and field?*

Santi Canella: I started out playing soccer and didn't become interested in track until middle school, when one of my PE coaches suggested that I try it out. I really liked all of the sprinting events — specifically the 100m, 200m, and 400m dashes — and slowly began to commit more and more of my time to training. I didn't start competing in jumping events until my sophomore year when I asked my coach if I could do the long jump. I hadn't tried it before, but it kept being one of my best events, so I decided to stick with it.

OP: *Who inspired you to focus on triple jumping?*

SC: Coach Cassie, one of my track and field coaches. During one of my first practices, she told me she was impressed by my form during drills and suggested that I try out the triple jump. I like to think I was always built for jumping. When I was a kid, I used to climb on stuff around the house and try to jump as far as I could from wherever I was. I was also one of the kids that could grab onto the basketball hoops in high school, so in some ways it feels like I was always meant to jump.

OP: *How did the pandemic affect your ability to join the track team?*

SC: As a walk-on, I really didn't feel the effect of the pandemic on my ability to be recruited. If anything, my process was much busier during the school year. I was interested in walking on and I met a jumper that encouraged me to reach out to the track and field coaches. I emailed them my jumping scores from high school and was later invited to practice with the team.

OP: *Is there a person or mentor that you consider to be an integral part of your journey to collegiate athletics?*

SC: My mom. She's always pushed me really hard throughout my life and I probably wouldn't be at Middlebury or on the track team without her. She's always been there for me ever since we moved from Italy when I was really young. She always has really high expectations for me, which can be hard to deal with at times, but I have to thank her for being there to push me, both academically and athletically.

OP: *What would you say is the hardest part of doing the triple jump?*

SC: Honestly, everything. The triple jump is a really taxing event both mentally and physically. The way your body moves during the event is really weird — you're trying to shift your body weight from foot to foot while running at full speed in order to jump farther. I've gotten shin splints during practices and I rolled my ankle during my last meet. It's really important for me to stay fit and be diligent in dealing with my recovery, especially with such a demanding practice schedule.

OP: *What would you say your biggest success in jumps has been so far?*

SC: Tying the school record for triple jump. Looking back on that meet, it felt pretty normal except for that one event. I felt really good about the jump after I finished, but I only learned that I had tied the record while I was eating afterwards. One of my teammates came running up to me and said that I had tied the school record for triple jump. I remember dropping my food and running all the way over to the record board in the Athletic Center to see that my jump tied the school record. It felt amazing, knowing that my hard work put me in a position to walk onto the team and to then go and tie a school record.

OP: *Do you have a favorite spot on campus?*

SC: There are so many. If I had to pick it would be either Proctor or the Athletic Center. Being in the Athletic Center really relaxes me, it allows me to zone in on practice and do what I have to do in order to become better. But it's honestly wherever the homies are at — as long as I'm with my friends that's where I enjoy being.

ALUM CONVERSATION WITH LINDA FELDMANN '81, WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF AND WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

By YINUO WANG
Contributing Writer

Linda Feldmann '81 majored in Russian Language and Literature at Middlebury and is now the Washington Bureau Chief at Christian Science Monitor. The Christian Science Monitor, or commonly known as "The Monitor" is not a religious publication, but an international nonprofit news organization. Linda is the White House Correspondent and oversees the Bureau. She also hosts the newsmakers' breakfast with members of the Congress, senior administration officials and major figures of both parties.

You can listen to the interview with Linda Feldmann www.middleburycampus.com/section/podcasts. It has been lightly edited here for content and clarity.

Q: Describe a typical day as Washington Bureau Chief at the Christian Science Monitor now.

A: There is really no typical day. Some days, roughly once a week, I work at the White House if I am the pool reporter. I would cover the President, travel with him in the motorcades, maybe be in the oval office if invited in. Other days I am constantly on my phone due to the pandemic. However, I am gradually having more in-person coffees and conversations as the situation is getting better.

"As I look back, I had the ingredients to be a journalist: curiosity towards the world and writing abilities."

Q: Is this job what you imagined yourself doing when you were in college?

A: Absolutely not. In fact, I never aspired to be a journalist. I probably should not admit this, but I have never even written for The Middlebury Campus. A good friend of mine was an editor of The Campus. I was in awe of her ability to be a fulltime student while managing her work at The Campus, which seems like two full time jobs. However, as I look back, I had the ingredients to be a journalist: curiosity towards the world and writing abilities.

Q: What inspired you to be a journalist then?

A: I studied in Moscow in the second semester of my junior year and met the Moscow Bureau Chief and Foreign Editor of the Christian Science Monitor. The Foreign Editor recommended me to be a Foreign Correspondent and gave me a job offer after college. I think the reason is that the Monitor likes employees who speak foreign languages. Great news for Middlebury students! I started at the bottom in the industry and became a reporter after seven years. Nonetheless, my experience 40 years ago was definitely not typical and will not apply today. To become a journalist today, one has to show a strong interest and have previous experience and clips to enter major newspapers.

Q: Middlebury is a rather liberal environment; D.C. is pro-establishments. How was your transition out of college into your career as a foreign correspondent?

A: Speaking of the political environment, I have learned over the years to set aside personal views and be dispassionate about the news. For instance, I am closely watching the recent news of Russia invading Ukraine. However, to be objective, I need to distance myself from the emotions. Moreover, Middlebury was not as liberal when I was a student as it is today.

Q: In America's increasing polarized political landscape, how do you keep an objective attitude?

A: I deal with and interview people across the political spectrum on a daily basis. Indeed, Washington and American politics have become polarized, but I have always appreciated the Washington tradition of strong political views. Given these, I believe that abilities to communicate with people who hold opposite views, understand their perspectives, and find common ground are key. That is not to say that the middle is always the right answer, but the middle is where things begin.

Q: Moving away from politics and back to your journey at Middlebury, what inspired you to choose your major, Russian Language and Literature?

A: I came to Middlebury precisely because of its strong language programs. I knew I wanted to continue with French, which I studied in high school, and also to learn something more exotic. As a child, I remembered my parents' collection of Russian record albums with beautiful covers, which was my entry into Russian culture. Also, before I knew a word of Russian, I've always appreciated the Russian love of literature, music, dance and theater, which inspired me to learn more about their language. I, therefore, declared a Russian major by the end of my first semester of freshman year. That might seem impractical to others, but I simply decided to major in my favorite subject and figure out other stuff later.

Q: You have studied abroad in Moscow for a semester and later worked as a USSR correspondent there. What inspired you? How was your experience there?

A: For me, the main appeal to study in Russia was the cultural exchange. It is especially vital during times of international tension. When I left for Moscow in January 1980, the USSR had just invaded Afghanistan. Going over there as a student at the height of the Cold War, knowing Russians as people, making Russian friends, and learning their culture, I think these are the connective tissues that set the foundation for international relations. Nowadays, I am glad to know that despite the national level of tension, there are still Russian and Chinese students coming over to the U.S. I believed that interpersonal relationships are vitally important as a student of Middlebury and Moscow, and I believe in it today.

"I believe that abilities to communicate with people who hold opposite views, understand their perspectives, and find common ground are key."

Q: What's a memorable interview you've had with someone from the White House?

COURTESY OF LINDA FELDMANN
A college yearbook photo of Linda Feldmann.

A: My most memorable experience was my interaction with the presidents. Though I have never had a sitdown interview with any of them, I have been in the oval office, talking to George W. Bush and flew on Air Force 1 a few times. I will never forget a time when Donald Trump came to the back of the plane where the reporters sat and just shot the breeze with us. His different behaviors on and off camera are interesting. And my goal in life wasn't to get rich but to have interesting experiences. In that regard, I have succeeded in both.

Q: Lastly, please share some of the most memorable moments as a student at Middlebury.

A: Well, getting a C+ in a physics class was memorable, which was my only C here. Middlebury invited some great concerts and musicians, such as Muddy Waters, Harry Chapin, Yoyo Ma, Ravi Shankar, and great speakers, like Buckminster Fuller. My professors are fantastic and we shared life-long friendships, not just between the students but extended to faculty as well. Lastly, I just want to shout out to Alexander Bakers, a professor in the Russian department and an active member of the community.

"I declared a Russian major by the end of my first semester of freshman year. That might seem impractical to others, but I simply decided to major in my favorite subject and figure out other stuff later."

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